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A YACHTSWOMAN'S CRUISES

AND

SOME STEAMER VOYAGES



CLIFFS OF THE WIGHT.

A YACHTSWOMAN'S CRUISES

AND SOME STEAMER VOYAGES

BY

MAUDE SPEED

ILLUSTRATED WITH SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE

IT is not easy to convey everything in a book's title, and certainly not an apology, therefore it must come in the preface, for without it I cannot offer for the reading of capable and experienced yachtsmen the plain and unvarnished account of these simple little cruises—taken only on well-known waters, in small yachts worked by only two people — *my husband* (whom I will call the Skipper), commander of our sailing yachts, and now in our 11-ton steamer, engineer and stoker as well—and *myself*—the humble deck-hand, steward, and cook. A limited crew, you will observe, therefore our achievements have been limited, and have perforce been restricted to comparatively near waters and short runs, along the English coast from Wivenhoe to Weymouth, along most of the French coast from Cherbourg to Ostend, through Holland, and on the Zuyder Zee. Moreover, I cannot hope

to command that respectful attention which is given to the writings of masters of the art, for mine is merely a voice from before the mast—not that of the man in command, whose accurate eye, intuitive judgment, and cool nerve have never yet failed him, and without whom the deck-hand would be a poor thing to be trusted with the safety of a good boat! Still, because in my love for the sea and interest in all that pertains to it I am second to none of you, and that pre-eminent qualification for practical yachting joins those that possess it in a brotherhood, I hope that this book may while away a tedious hour of waiting for water, or for the tide to turn, and may recall similar experiences or suggest a route for future runs.

Part II. leaves the somewhat hard life of practical yachting alone, and deals with the countries visited on large steamers and liners. It may appeal more to that large body of the general public who, though neither inclined nor qualified for small boat yachting, love the sea sufficiently to enjoy being often on it. Should they care to follow my lead on their next holiday they can do so with no greater tax on skill or power than the per-

formance of that most difficult feat of all to some of us—the signing of a cheque !

A portion of the book has already appeared from time to time in the form of magazine articles, and my grateful thanks are due to the editors of *The Yachtsman*, *Badminton*, and *Country Life* for their kindness in allowing me to reprint them.

The little sketches which illustrate the book indicate an additional pleasure which works well with a life on the sea, and the loss of which would deprive me of a good deal of the subtle charm of cruising and voyaging.

MAUDE SPEED.

YARMOUTH, ISLE OF WIGHT.

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PART I

CRUISES IN SMALL YACHTS

A Yachtswoman's Cruises

CHAPTER I

ON SMALL YACHT CRUISING IN GENERAL

“AH! there they goes! They knows nothing and they fears nothing,” said one old tar to another, shaking his head ominously as two young, high-spirited lads sailed off down the Lymington river on a squally day in a little open boat. The sentence was a boatman’s rendering of that other and more significant proverb “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” and described the circumstances exactly, as the day (for an open boat) was one demanding caution, skill, and judgment, and the two tyros hardly knew the jib sheet from the topping lift. Yet they came out of it safely, and with something gained in the way of experience, just as hundreds of other beginners do every year. Indeed there seems to be a special Providence watching over reckless

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young yachtsmen, as will be seen when we think of the rarity of fatal accidents amongst them compared with other sports in which the risks are no greater—mountain-climbing and hunting, for instance. In all these things knowledge comes only by practice, and just as Corporal Trim said “One good thrust with the bayonet is worth all the discourses on the art of war,” so we old hands know that one good bucketting in a boat alone will teach an intelligent man more than all he can learn on the art of boat-sailing from books. In this, as in other sports requiring knowledge and nerve combined, youth is the time to begin, and I do not think that any one can successfully take to it when middle age is reached. The whole thing lends itself especially to the inconsequence and adventurous spirits of youth, and although those who have become experts can enjoy the sport when youth has long fled, it can never be learnt then, nor are the contretemps and hardships that are always attendant upon it taken quite so carelessly and easily as they were once upon a time !

And how one has to harden one's heart and throw over all “shore-going” ideas of hours and meals and every conventional rule

of life in cruising ! Perhaps that constitutes one of its charms, and makes a cruise such a complete and beneficial holiday. Tides rule the day, not clocks. "Can you tell me what time it is?" said an old lady to a waterman. "'Alf ebb, mum," was the prompt and (to her) cryptic reply, and that expresses a waterman's idea of the hour. Meals must be served just when they can be prepared ; breakfast is often eaten in the middle of the night, when the stars are shining, before a start at dawn ; dinner comes off sometimes after a prolonged run in the afternoon, when people in houses are thinking of tea ; and you go to bed and get up according to the hours when the tide serves for a start.

Of course when at anchor you can be more conventional in your rules, and all people who work their own yachts without assistance from paid hands know what an important part in the cruise *food* plays, and how much of one's time is given up perforce to the purchasing of it, cooking it, eating it, and then (the penalty paid for each meal) washing up the crockery and nasty greasy pots and pans ! For a really good penance commend me to the cleansing of a fish-pan and fishy plates !

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Really, sometimes at anchor, when a spell of high living is the rule, one has hardly put away the breakfast things and swept all the crumbs from the floor when one has to begin peeling potatoes and carrots for dinner and getting a pudding and other things prepared for that repast! The meals seem incessant, and I do wish we could bring ourselves down to the Turkish régime of two only a day, but experiments in that direction have ended in failure, and we find that in our nation a too long empty waistcoat makes the temper snappish! The culinary business is all very well for people who have nothing else to do, but with that most exacting of all mistresses, *an Art*, tugging at one's skirts, one wishes the meals would cook themselves automatically. Glorious sunset effects demand the brush peremptorily, and are taken with an unpleasant consciousness all the while that the supper will be two hours late, and lovely morning mists *will* appear just when the steam from the kettle should be arising for breakfast!

As to food—I could fill a whole chapter with a list of things long experience has proved to be feasible and most easily prepared. Tinned

meats, soups, and bottled fruits are an untold boon in the yacht's locker, condensed milk is a substitute for the real thing one soon gets used to, and sardines, baked beans, curried fowl, and salmon and lobsters in glass jars provide many a good meal when far from shops. Meals, it must be remembered, are often difficult to get when a long passage is being taken on a rough sea, and should be prepared and put ready to hand before the start. We find Stewart's Roy Hunt Biscuits very good. Some sandwiches should be cut, and a jelly made the day before, as it is easily eaten from a cup and is acceptable in the strong salt air. Cheese and Grape-nuts and packets of milk-chocolate are supporting, and can be kept handy. Liebig or Bovril made strong with a dash of whisky in it picks you up wonderfully if you get cold and done-for after an extra long voyage, though I do not find anything—even champagne—half as good in that line as hot milk; but then that is not often available at those times, though milk can be kept fresh for twenty-four hours easily if a spoonful of powdered sugar is well stirred into it, and it is then kept in a cool place: overboard when at anchor, with a string round the

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bottle's neck, is the best dodge. So much for the larder department.

For the cooking stove, every one has his own choice, and *we* do not care for the popular Primas, but prefer two fine double-wick Salamanders side by side and rigidly fixed by a dodge of the Skipper's own making, the bulk-head adjacent to them being protected by asbestos. I think they give as little unpleasant reminder to one's olfactory nerves of their presence as any I have ever found, though I must confess that the matutinal hour the Skipper elects for dressing and filling them is somewhat trying. A paraffin stove in process of trimming is "not all lavender," and one's nostrils object to being greeted with the fumes on waking! He cleans them with the riding-light when he takes it down at 6 A.M., as he says "If you don't put it away clean, you often have to do it all in a hurry in the twilight, and it's better to make one job of the business."

The next thing of importance to the stove in the cabin fittings is the sleeping bunk. The species which lets down for night and folds back against the lining by day (disguised with cretonne or a coloured rug) is by far

the best, and unless you are very young and hardy, *don't* try sleeping on the locker lids which form the cabin seats—at least for any length of time. A good night's sleep is often well earned, and you can really get it in those folding-up bunks, for though very narrow they are exceedingly comfortable with a good hair mattress. I tried an air one, but gave it up, as I always felt so cold on it. When in the early days of married life I began my cruising in a 2½-ton sailing canoe (on which we spent seven weeks at a stretch), my bed was a canvas mattress stuffed with corks laid on the floor ! a brilliant idea of the Skipper's, as he said it made a bed by night and a life-buoy in case of disaster, while my bolster was the jib in its little bag. I thought the awful discomfort and sleeplessness I went through was inseparable from small boat cruising, and tried heroically to harden myself into liking it, but looking back upon that experience I would risk drowning twenty times over rather than go through it again !

I have begun (woman-like) with the interior arrangements because so much of the pleasure of cruising depends on them, and with a little attention they can be made all right even in

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the smallest boat, but upon the more important matter of the yacht herself few rules can be laid down, as the size must depend upon the pocket and inclination of the owner and upon the number of people she is to carry—whether she is destined for single-handed cruising, for two amateurs, or for the more easy-going yachting that comes when paid hands occupy the fo'castle.

More than half the small cruisers built now have a motor in them—which of course entails the knowledge of how to use it on the part of somebody on board—and there is no doubt that it is the greatest boon to sailing yachts of any size, large or small, as it renders them so much more independent of wind than they were before, and would save many a contretemps even if the boat can only be moved at three miles an hour. More than once we have spent the whole night out in the Solent or somewhere not far from land with a party of people on board, all the wind having fallen away, leaving us helpless and unmovable, while various distressed relatives sat up through the nocturnal hours of anxiety and foreboding, imagining all sorts of disasters happening to the guests we had with us. On another occasion we

started early for Southampton Water to be present at a dinner-party that evening, and arrived instead for breakfast the next morning ! Numerous other catastrophes I could detail, and so could every one else who has had any experience of sailing. All can now be avoided by the fitting of a little motor, and to the large yachts the same thing applies. Powerful motors are appearing in them all, some of them up to 200 h.p. and capable of running a 460-ton yacht at 10 miles an hour. They save all the bother of a tow from a tug or the risk of sailing in and out of port, and I feel sure they will make large sailing yachts popular again in the future, for who that really loves the sport could prefer the mechanical motive power ? I would rather have one good sail than half-a-dozen runs in a steamer, large or small. It is like an exhilarating gallop on horseback compared with a ride on a bicycle !

Considering the facilities we in our island kingdom possess for the sport, one can only wonder why this most health-giving of all pursuits is not more generally indulged in, especially as the "week-end habit" has taken such a hold on the dwellers in large cities. Hundreds of little cottages are kept now in

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the country for the Saturday to Monday visit and for the annual holiday. Why not a small yacht instead? It is no more expensive, no rates and taxes to pay, and it has the advantage of being movable, so that when you tire of one place another is available. If a 15-ton boat was kept by a married couple or two men as a week-end resort, a paid hand could be shipped for the annual cruise, or some fisherman could be taken just for an afternoon's run, while a smaller boat could be worked—after experience and knowledge has been gained—without his assistance. Delightful though cruising in large yachts undoubtedly is, I feel convinced that the *real true* flavour of the sport is reserved for those who cruise in small boats and do all their own work. Plenty of hardships and fatigue and discomfort will be stirred in with the pleasures, as all know who have tried it, but they will be borne cheerfully as part of the play if the love of the sea and the sport is deep down in the yachtsman's heart, and only then.

I do not think that many women as yet care sufficiently for the sport to face all this for it, as one so seldom meets a woman who is really any help on board or the least bit enthusiastic

over hard cruising, and it is remarkable in these days because they are keen on other branches of sport—ride to hounds with the best of the men, climb, fish, and even shoot well—yet in a boat they become helpless and useless; everything has to be done for them, and they rarely make a rope fast properly or keep a boat accurately on a compass course. True they are to be found at most of the regattas round our coasts much to the fore, and some ladies even steer a racing yacht from start to finish with great ability and skill, but then there is the clapping of hands and the éclat of applause as a stimulant in the racing, and the hope of proudly carrying off a coveted prize. We all love admiration and applause, and would go through anything to gain it, and I fear it does not at all follow that one who is quite the sailor under those circumstances would be found in an equally happy frame of mind out in the Channel or coasting along some lonely shore or desolate creek far from the glare of the footlights (or in other words the focus of the club telescopes), with only the gift of nature's best beauties as the prize, and the glorious lift of the yacht's bows over the green rollers as the compensation for long

hours at the tiller, salt spray flying relentlessly over the face all the time, and very often a considerable deal of knocking about as well.

It is wonderful what blows and injuries one receives in a long turn to windward. I have frequently had arms and legs covered with black bruises from tumbling and knocking against the sharp edges of seats, &c., in the general plunging and pitching about. Then there is no maid with a hot bath ready when you bring up dead tired, and the cabin has to be dried and put to rights before you can start the meal you are dying for, and you are lucky after a heavy thrash if, when you turn in, your bedding has kept dry, for the sea will squeeze in through seams and skylight that seemed perfectly tight, in the most surprising manner. I have frequently heard of people, when most they needed a night's sleep, finding their mattress soaked with salt water, and in our first little yacht have had to sleep under an umbrella many times in heavy rain, the deck never being quite tight in that boat. Still, everything is endured with philosophy *if* the love of the sport and the sea is only strong enough.

A reason for the unpopularity of cruising with ladies may be found partly in the hope-

lessness of looking pretty in the way of dress. The effort to do so may be given up from the beginning, and put aside for the time with conventional hours and other trammels of society. Men and women alike doing the work of the boat have to study comfort, to wear loose garments of rational make, and of material that will either wash or stand a good deal of salt water. The weather-beaten, rather uncombed appearance of a practical yachtsman who has made his toilet in a tiny cabin and done some washing-down and varnishing and heaving of the anchor chain in his shore-going suit, presents a very different appearance to that of the spotless, beautiful young yachting dandies one meets about the streets of Cowes, probably off big vessels which never ship a dash of spray (and wouldn't put to sea if there was any flying), and on which the days are passed lounging lazily in deck-chairs or partaking of elaborate meals. Moreover, the limited space for clothes and the many garments that are absolutely *necessary* makes one curtail all one can. Oilskins take a lot of room, so do sea-boots and pilot cloth coats, warm woollen jerseys, and wraps of a wintry nature for the cold starts in the chilly hour before dawn.

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Rain must be provided for too, and also heat, for under a fierce July sun a boat's cabin is a veritable oven, and I advise a striped covering for the skylight to put over it under those conditions, otherwise one feels like a cucumber ripening in a frame! Good thick rugs must be kept for cold nights too, which may come after the hottest day sometimes. Once last August our cabin thermometer fell from 80° at 5 P.M. to 53° at midnight. So with all these vital things to store, it is no wonder that smart blouses and elegant hats have to be left at home. The coiffure also harks back to primitive simplicity, one's complexion becomes like a haymaker's, and one's hands don't look exactly as if they had come straight from a manicure's! A single decent straw hat for "Sunday best" is all I am allowed besides the cloth-peaked cap for practical work, a sou'-wester for bad weather, and a sun-bonnet (most delightful of all head-gear) for the deck and dinghy. We must therefore all bid a temporary good-bye to vanity when we embark for a cruise!

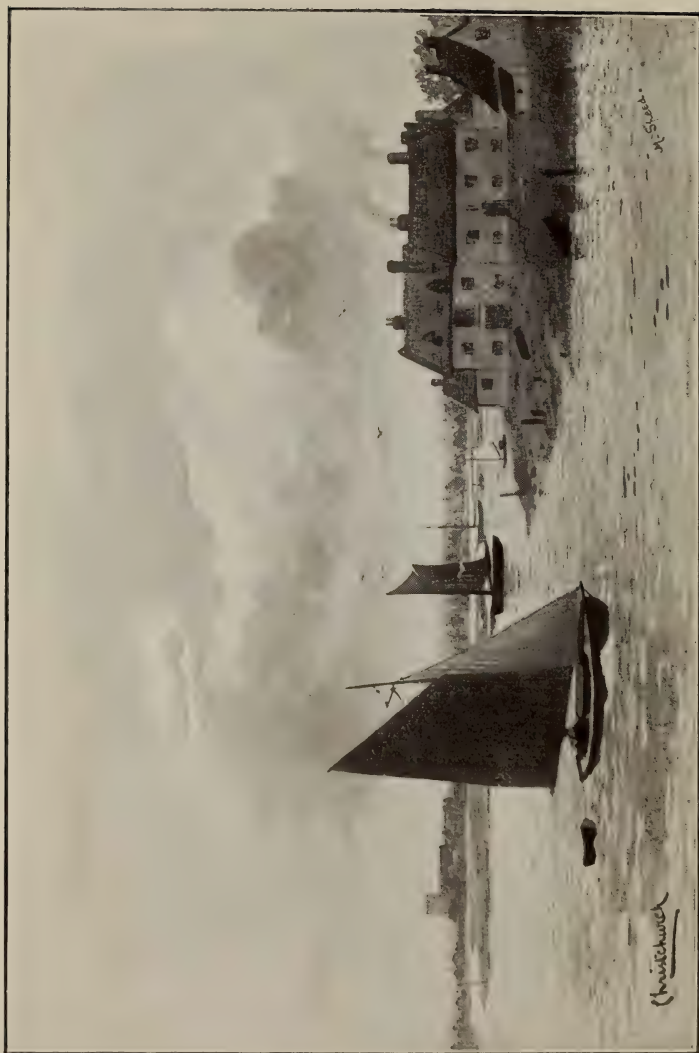
I cannot conclude this chapter without alluding to the most terrible of all *bête noirs* attendant upon the sport,—sea-sickness, and

it is probably *that* which thins the ranks of its votaries more than anything else—not entirely, though, as the fear of it does not keep people from taking pleasure voyages in liners. Well, it must either be innately absent, must be overcome by degrees as you get used to the motion of small yachts, or the cruises must be confined to sheltered waters and voyages in fine weather with harbours handy to run to, for I need hardly say that it cannot possibly be put into the programme of a prolonged run across Channel when two people only are working the boat. Our hands are quite full enough without any invalid work thrown in, and the horrors of steering and getting meals if not quite fit would never be gone through twice! For the unproved passengers you may have on board, though, these few tips may be of use:—*Never* allow them to go below if there is any motion. Keep them looking at the line of horizon and nibbling dry biscuits, and if they begin turning pale make them sing—lustily, for all they are worth, and incessantly. My sister once felt ill when crossing from Sark to Guernsey in a sailing-boat, and said she kept the sickness off entirely by singing to the two boatmen

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all the time, and I have known others resort to it with success. Also (and this is the best advice) if the paleness continues put your helm up and run them home as soon as possible !

I expect you all keep log-books? If not, do start one at once. Let it be a good strong one, and take some trouble over it, putting down everything worth remembering in future years, and illustrating it with photos, post-cards, sketches, and anything else of the sort. It will form a much-valued souvenir of happy, healthy times when you return from the cruise and the boat is laid up for the winter, and in "the evil days" which I hope are still far, far ahead of you, when you realise that the time has come to sell the boat and cruise only in the memory of the past years, the precious log-books will seem like companions left to you, who can chat over the jolly times with you again and help to keep a young heart in your old body, and a cheery interest in the doings of those who are still having their day.



CHAPTER II

ACROSS THE CHANNEL IN OUR FOUR- TONNER

WE had so thoroughly explored every creek in the Solent and along the south coast from Chichester to Weymouth both in our first $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton sailing canoe the *Viper*, and in her successor the cutter *Lerna*, that we firmly resolved the next holiday time at our disposal should see us, weather permitting, bound for a peep at the Normandy ports. Our little craft was 28 ft. 6 in. long, beam 6 ft. 9 in. and drew 4 ft. 6 in. She had a deep well, which could be covered at night or in bad weather with a sliding hatch—a great convenience, and I should advise no one to have a cruiser built without it. June brought us ten days of leisure and every prospect of fine weather, so we provisioned the *Lerna* (her gear had been already thoroughly seen to as usual every spring) and kept a watchful eye on the glass.

It was on a Monday evening that we got

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on board, at Yarmouth, I.W., ready for a start at daybreak; but when we looked out at 3 A.M. not a breath ruffled the calm surface of the waters, so we just dropped out of the harbour with the last of the ebb, past the silent and sleeping little town, from which there arose not so much of life and movement as a wreath of smoke in the still morning air, and having picked up our moorings outside, to be in readiness for the breeze when it came, turned in and went to roost again. At 8.30, when the bacon began to fizzle in the pan for breakfast, things were much the same; but at noon a light breeze sprang up—not the E. or N. one we had been whistling for, but W.S.W.; so, as the sails were all ready to set, and we had no wish to waste a day of our short time, we cast over our mooring buoy and beat down to the Needles. The wind was very light indeed outside, and as the day waned it dropped almost to a dead calm. It is not often that one can have tea in perfect comfort on the cabin table out in the open Channel, but we could in this instance—first the crew and then the skipper, as usual when we are under way. We did not like the appearance of the sunset at all. In contradiction to the

high glass, it looked thoroughly bad, and I said it reminded me of the colour of the sky on the evening of March 1, '97, which was followed by that terrific gale which wrought such havoc amongst the fine old trees all over England. The hills of the Isle of Wight are visible for 30 miles out at sea, and they were still showing high when darkness fell, and the splendid light at St. Catherine's Point—6,000,000 candle-power, one of the finest on our coasts—came to cheer us with its revolving ray. In the early part of the night we each took a short sleep in turn, but about 1 A.M. the glass began to fall with a drop; dark clouds rolled up and obscured the moon, seeing which the Skipper went aloft and unlaced the topsail, and as the breeze began to freshen at 3 A.M. I got the kettle boiling and served out to all hands a cup of strong Liebig with some cheese and biscuits. A very wise precaution it was, for shortly after this the rain came, the sea got up, and cooking was henceforth out of the question. By this time the dawn was breaking wild and grey; we had sunk St. Catherine's light, and after an interval of about two hours picked up that of Barfleur, being rather proud of seeing it

twinkling over the line of horizon exactly where we expected it. It is 236 ft. high, and visible for 22 miles.

The wind continued to freshen, so we reefed the mainsail, and, as I began to feel very tired, I took off my oilskin and sou'-wester and tried to have a nap on the lee bunk ; but in one of the tremendous plunges the boat gave, the Skipper's flute took a flying leap from its shelf and landed on my forehead, leaving a memory of itself there for several days after in the shape of a large black bump. The hard-hearted man consoled me with the reflection that it was a good thing it had come down on me broadside on and not bow first, or it might have marked me for life !

I soon gave up trying to rest in such a pandemonium. A small boat's cabin is so very lively in a heavy sea, cushions and kettles and things flying in all directions, no matter how secure you think you have made them ; so I put on my oilskin again and went into the well, where I fished out of the provision-locker some bread-and-butter and a tin of meat, and in spite of fatigue enjoyed the morning shower-bath of spray and salt water which was drenching the boat from stem to stern

and deluging the jib and foresail. So strong was the wind that one of the brass jib-sheet cleats was bent up and torn right out by the pressure on the sail, and we had rather a difficulty to belay the sheet afterwards.

We were by this time considerably to leeward of Cherbourg, and found that a strong tide (the tide-races on this coast are fearful) was carrying us up to the eastward, and that it would be a long and tedious business, when the tide slackened, to beat to windward again ; so we studied the chart of Barfleur, into which we noticed some fishing-boats going, and seeing the entrance, though narrow, was easy and well marked, we eased off the sheets and made for the row of black and red buoys which lead one to the quaint little harbour. A gale of wind was blowing by this time, the smacks and trawlers were running for port under the shortest of sails, and the rain was coming down in angry squalls. Very glad were we, therefore, to leave the turmoil outside, and rush between the stone piers into quiet and peace. On the right-hand pier an immense Crucifix stands facing the mariner as he comes in, and behind it is the large and substantial church, on the very edge of the sea. A number

of people, fishermen and others, collected in a little crowd to see us come in, as a small English yacht is an unusual visitor to this little port, once an important place, where William Rufus and other of our Norman kings used to sail to and from England—centuries before the great town and harbour of Cherbourg existed. Many willing helpers ran to assist us in making fast to the quay, and we found a few English trading ketches shipping early potatoes for the London market. It was 11.30 before the sails were stowed, so we had been out for twenty-three hours.

While the Skipper was getting things ship-shape on deck, I was busy with chamois and dusters below drying up the inevitable leaks which always will squeeze through the skylight, chain-pipe, and other places in a wet thrash to windward, and reducing the general confusion to order. Meanwhile the kettle and frying-pan were on the stove, and a change of clothes and breakfast were very refreshing ; still more so was the heavy sleep which followed it for two or three hours, before landing to explore the town and send telegrams and cards to announce our safe arrival. We did not know at the time how welcome they would

be to the recipients, as the gale had broken some hours earlier on the English coast than it did with us, and with still greater force, doing considerable damage to the shipping (wrecking Nelson's old flagship, the *Foudroyant*, amongst others), and causing an anxious night on our behalf to those who knew we had started for France. Never was anything more deceiving than the conduct of the glass on this occasion in giving no warning of the approaching disturbance till it arrived, particularly as it was not a passing storm, but one of five days' duration, during the whole of which time we found it impossible to escape from Barfleur, and were thankful to be in such safe quarters. The only drawback to the harbour is that it completely dries out at low water, the rise and fall of the tide being so great. This, of course, entails much slacking up and making fast of the mast-head rope and others, and meant for us a disturbance in the middle of each night, as we took the ground soon after our arrival (at about 1 P.M.).

As at low tide our decks were 16 feet below the level of the quay, no ladder was procurable, and as I could not climb the rigging, my mode of reaching the quay and descending

from it again caused much amusement, for I was hauled up to the cross-trees in the boatswain's chair, and swung myself out from the mast till a friendly hand gripped me and drew me to land. A knot of peasant women assembled on one occasion to see me swing down to the deck, and one said in a sympathetic manner to me : "N'as-tu pas peur?" "Mais non," said another; "Madame n'a pas peur; elle y est accoutumée!"

We found the people most civil and obliging, and altogether did not regret our enforced sojourn amongst them. The shops were close to us and were well supplied, and we took many interesting walks, in spite of the bad weather, to the villages round, and out to the great lighthouse, off which the white waves were leaping and roaring in the race in a manner that looked anything but inviting. On Sunday the north cone was hoisted, and the wind, blowing as strong as ever, shifted to the N.W. But we were in luck to be in Barfleur for this Sunday out of all the year, as it was their great *fête* day, when the annual Procession of the Host takes place through the streets. The church bell was going from 5 A.M. for services, and the Celebration of High Mass at 10.30 was most elaborate,

and attended by crowds of devout worshippers, who had flocked in from all the surrounding villages for the occasion. The procession was to have taken place after the morning service, but owing to the high wind it had to be postponed till it moderated in the afternoon. Every house was decorated with flags and white sheets, completely concealing the shop windows ; the streets were strewn with rushes and wild flowers, and three platforms which had been erected the day before were covered with carpet, the sides decked with evergreens, and an Altar placed on each at the top of the steps, adorned with candles and flowers. On these the sacred emblem was to rest. In this little Norman town, far away from tourists and outsiders, the atmosphere of whole-hearted devotion and reverence which pervaded the entire crowd was very striking. All the townsmen and fishermen walked first in their best clothes and bare-headed ; then came the priest in his vestments, carrying the Host under a white silk canopy, preceded and followed by priests and acolytes singing and swinging censers of incense ; then came the women and girls, and finally the children. I have never seen anything more picturesque and impressive than the whole

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crowd kneeling reverently with one accord whenever the priest stopped and carried the Host up to one of the temporary Altars, where he held it up before the eyes of the people. It was finally taken back to the church, and deposited in its special place with great solemnity.

On the following morning the wind had abated and the sky looked clearer ; so at about 11 A.M. we laid in a final stock of provisions, and, bidding farewell to Barfleur, sailed gaily out of the little harbour. Outside we found more wind, so lay-to and reefed ; also shifted to a smaller jib, to be ready in case the breeze piped up again. But the weather improved as the day advanced, and we had a nice beat of about twenty miles to Cherbourg ; in fact, before we arrived there the wind fell quite light, and we had to shake out the reef again and change back to the large jib. The fine expanse of water inside the shelter of the breakwater would afford a grand sailing-ground for dinghys and small boats. We were some time after we entered the harbour sailing up to an anchorage near the town, and here we enjoyed the first night of undisturbed sleep since we started for our cruise. We spent a whole day in "doing" Cherbourg. It is a fine town, but we thought

a short visit to it went a long way, and were glad that our longer time had been spent in the less commonplace little port of Barfleur.

The Cherbourg people were most enthusiastic over their new ship, a "magnifique bateau-de-guerre," that had just started to take part in the great Naval Review at Spithead. Nearly every one we spoke to told us of her, and even the most intelligent people seemed to think she would be the feature of the whole show, and that nothing else would be worth looking at after her. Even Barfleur was ringing with her praises. Some fishermen who had seen her gave me a graphic description of her, but no adjectives at their command seemed strong enough to describe her magnificence. When a few days afterwards we found ourselves amongst the war-giants of all nations, we saw the treasure of the French, and, I am afraid, were not quite so dumbfounded with admiration for her as we expected to be.

A start for home was now imperative, so we arose the next morning betimes ; in fact, when I lighted the lamp and awoke the Skipper at 2.30 A.M., the stars were still shining, and darkness was reigning. Daylight soon came, though, and by the time we had finished

breakfast the sun shone forth in unclouded splendour ; but we had to wait some time for the wind, which, to our delight, came at last from the east—just where we wanted it. We had by this time got the boat ready, and the Berthon dinghy folded up and put upon deck, as she is not supposed to be towed in the open sea unless in the most settled weather ; and during the latter part of our cruise over we had been considerably alarmed for her safety, so she was firmly secured on the port quarter. We got off at 6 A.M., sailed slowly down to the mouth of the harbour with very light air, but it freshened up when we passed out, and the day was henceforth made to order for us. We were under full canvas, but the topsail and whole mainsail were just as much as she could carry, and rather drove her, though she rode over the large Channel seas bravely, her fore-deck buried in foam, but very little being shipped aft. The course was ruled off on the chart, and our patent log set ; so every two hours we hauled it in and marked off our position. As there was a considerable haze all round, we quickly lost sight of France, and it was many hours before we sighted the English coast. Then we found that the

easterly-going tide had carried us a good deal to windward of our destination, and we had to ease off the sheets for the Needles, which we rounded against tide at 7 P.M., the white cliffs looking splendid in the evening light. The log showed the distance we had travelled to be 70 miles, and the time was thirteen hours. We dropped our anchor in Alum Bay for a well-earned night's rest, and were very glad to get in, as with the wind falling so light it was just a question for some time as to whether we should stem the tide round the Needles or have to lie-to out at sea till the flood began to make—a prospect we didn't relish after our long run and early rising.

CHAPTER III

OUR FRENCH CRUISE IN THE *BEAVER*

THE cruise to Normandy recorded in the last chapter had been all too short, and we determined to make a longer exploration of the coast on the first favourable opportunity. Meanwhile we had disposed of the *Lerna* and purchased the cutter *Beaver*, a deep-keeled, capable boat of 6 tons, in which we had a little more room and a little more sailing power than in our old friend. A nice spell of holiday time came to us at last, and we moved off down to Poole first of all, as that charming harbour, with its wild stretches of heather country, its pine-clad shores and sandy beaches, is a very favourite anchorage of ours. I don't know how long we might have dangled on there had it not been that the Skipper, peering out of the fore-hatch at dawn on the morning of July 15th, felt a nice little zephyr due north blowing on his cheek! This was irresistible, and he immediately awoke the drowsy and grumbling crew, sternly squashed



THE NEEDLES

a threatened mutiny in that quarter, and gave orders to sail for France !

The *Beaver* was anchored off Poole Town, and the sail down the harbour just before sunrise was lovely ; the cool morning breeze was heavy with the scent of hay, and all the sea-birds were noisily calling to each other—exchanging remarks, I suppose, about their various breakfast dishes ?

The day continued glorious throughout and the wind very light, so darkness overtook us some time before we reached our destination, for it is a far cry from Poole to Cherbourg (71 miles) for a little boat, and we had been almost becalmed for some time in the middle of the day. With the night the breeze freshened, but, trusting implicitly to the lights marked in the chart, as one always must, we steered straight for them and the invisible land and found ourselves, sure enough, safely inside the breakwater, and at 10.30 P.M. anchored close to the dockyard. A distinct feeling of satisfaction comes after a cross-Channel run, and one turns in with a pleasant feeling that—

“ Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night’s repose.”

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Those who sail the seas in small ships worked by themselves know the sensation well, and it is one of the best things to be got out of a foreign run, and quite unknown to those grandees on the big yachts who have everything done for them.

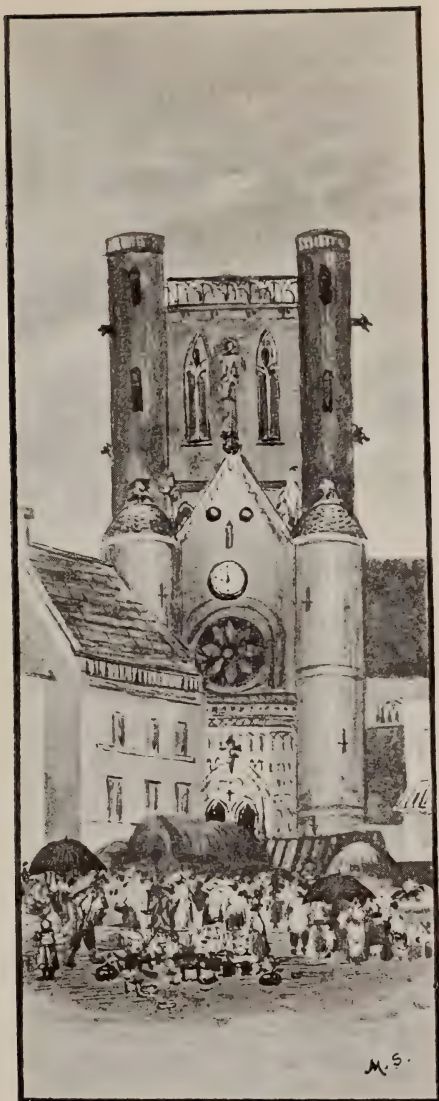
We spent the next day in shopping and provisioning, for having come away on the spur of the moment our lockers were not as full as they might be, and shopping in a French town is always quite a pleasure on account of the cheerful civility of the tradesmen and their obliging ways. Very fine weather and a N.W. wind continuing, we thought we had better be pushing on, so the 17th saw us sailing at 5 A.M. for St. Vaaste, a place the Skipper had long been pining to see, as on the chart it looks most inviting, with a capital natural harbour formed by two islands, the bend of the land affording shelter from all winds but the east, and a little port to run into if necessary. We thought we should want to spend at least a week there, but found one day quite enough, for at present its history as an attractive yachting resort has yet to be made; and that it has a future before it I feel sure, for no place could be more

admirably adapted by nature for a cruising-ground than this, and as the interest Frenchmen are taking in practical yachting increases every year, they will very soon find it out. The small harbour partially dries out at low tide, so that unless you have a comparatively flat-bottomed boat, you must (in order to sit upright) be in attendance on the mast-head rope at every rise and fall of tide—making it fast when you first ground, and slacking it again when you refloat. This is the worst of cruising on the French coast in a deep boat; all the harbours dry out at low tide more or less, and therefore you can only comfortably visit those that have an artificial basin. This makes most of the picturesque interesting little places unavailable. It would be better if there were three or four on board, as they could then take charge in turns, but in our case it is not good enough. The next day's run began at 6 A.M., and was a long one of 56 miles along the coast to Trouville. Six miles from St. Vaaste we passed the two little islands of St. Marcouf, with a fort on each. In the future days, when this is a yachting station, they will make a nice picnic place to run to in the steam launches, as there would always be a

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sheltered landing-place on the lee side. The wind kept N.N.W., so there was a considerable swell rolling in when the wind freshened in the middle of the day, but we arrived off the narrow entrance to Trouville harbour, just as we had hoped to do, at the top of the tide (8 P.M.). The yawl *Anaconda* making for it piloted us in, and just at dusk we moored stem and stern in the nice little yacht basin, forming one of a large confraternity of all sizes and flags, and in there we were simply imprisoned for nearly a fortnight. The lovely weather that had brought us so far departed the next day, for the remainder of our cruise, or only came occasionally for a day at a time. The glass fell suddenly during the night, and a S.W. gale which came on was followed by days and days of strong northerly winds blowing right into the harbour, and entailing a beat out which was not desirable in such narrow waters, or an expensive tow by a tug.

We got very sick of the place after the first few days, and were much disappointed at the absence of the gaieties and amusements we had anticipated in a place that has such a reputation for that sort of thing. "How nice it will be," we had sniggered, "to live there on



THE MARKET-PLACE, FÉCAMP

board our own boat free of cost, while people at the hotels are paying fabulous sums for mere attics." We had expected to see all the great French beauties and all the fashions of this year and the next ; but, alas ! the only occupants of the seats at the café tables on the *plage* were a most second-rate lot of commonplace people out for their annual seaside holiday, while the gambling Casino that I thought would be a smaller edition of Monte Carlo was a very tame little affair. The secret is that the tremendous influx of *les deux mondes* which has given Trouville its name only lasts for a fortnight. It commences with the first day of the Deauville races in the middle of August, and just for that brief spell the gigantic hotels are crammed, the maximum limit to stakes at the tables is doubled, and things in general "hum." Provisions, too, rise to famine prices, though they are not at other times far short of that mark, as is usually the case in places demoralised by periodical visits, however short, from the very rich and extravagant. The quickest way of getting to the shops from our dock was to cross the river by the ferry, *à propos* of which the Skipper made a joke worth recording. I remarked that our frequent crossings

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had cost us a whole franc that day, to which he replied, "Never mind, many a woman has spent more than that to-day on her back" (*bac* = French for ferry!). The fishing-boats all lie moored alongside the long quay in great numbers just as they did fifty years ago, when Trouville was but a little fishing village, and attracted the attention, by its picturesque simplicity, of two celebrated French artists who introduced it to the world by their canvases. When *digues* and hotels and railways and piers arrive, beauty goes, and there is nothing artistic about the Trouville of to-day except the boats themselves with the sepia-coloured and much-patched sails. Early one morning a slight flaw of wind from the S.W. enabled us to make a hasty escape from the basin before the gates closed for the day (they are open at each high tide for about four hours) and we sailed between the narrow piers for the entrance; but here a very narrow escape has to be recorded from complete disaster, for as we approached the mouth of the harbour our light breeze fell away to a calm, leaving us with a heavy swell running in from outside, and an easterly going tide setting across the harbour—a nasty trap in places where the piers are of open piles admit-

ting the tide through them. We were of course carried down on to the heavy framework and supports of the right-hand one, the large waves that were running in lifting us at them in an alarming manner. No one was about at that early hour of 4 A.M. to run out a rope or anchor for us. The lighthouse-keeper peered down at us from above, but all he could do in the way of encouraging us was to moan piteously, "Monsieur, vous êtes perdu, vous êtes perdu." The boat's life depended solely on the strength of her master's arm, for as each wave endeavoured to dash her against the pier, he held her off by dint of sheer force with an oar, working her along at the same time inch by inch, till finally, after an eternity of anxiety, the Titanic struggle ended in victory, and at last her bowsprit cleared the pier, and we breathed again as we launched forth into the deep and steered eastwards for Fécamp. It was one of our few glorious days, and we went gaily past Cap de la Hève, Cap d'Antifer, and Etretat, with its beach and houses shining in the sun and its three fine arched rocks—a very interesting place to me, on account of its being the scene of Alphonse Karr's charming book, *Le Chemin le plus Court*, which I had just finished

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reading for the third time. As we approached our destination, the wind fell light in the most provoking way, and the tide carried us down past the entrance to the harbour. It was long before we drifted back to it again, and just squeezed in with the last of the daylight, after having been sailing for sixteen hours. Rather a tiring day, as, in spite of the light breeze, there was such a heavy swell running all the time (the result of many days of strong northerly winds) that it was difficult to cook our meals or even to rest. I tried a siesta, but had to give it up, as the motion prohibited sleep.

We approached the narrow entrance with some anxiety as to the depth of water we should find on the bar, for, had it been as shallow as that at Trouville, we could not have entered at that time of tide, and should have had to put to sea and lie-to for the night—not an inviting prospect, as the glass was not high and very dirty weather came on before morning. However, our fears were not justified ; we stole in cautiously, with frequent heavings of the lead-line, and found plenty of water. Great cliffs (450 feet high) rear themselves straight up on the left side of the harbour, a lighthouse being on the summit. We were too late to

enter the basin, and had to spend the night in the outer port, where we were much disturbed towards morning by the arrival and departure of large fishing-smacks. The *Beaver* went on a hard alongside the quay next morning for a scrub, and later in the day we passed through the gates into a nice large basin close to the post-office, shops, and everything. Fécamp is an interesting old town, and we had plenty of time to make its acquaintance, as the wind again continued N.W. for an unbroken spell of over a fortnight, and blowing strong at that most of the time, with a considerable sea roaring on the shingle beach outside. The port is a great one for fishing-smacks, and the start every day at high tide is an interesting sight. Some of the large ones take crews of 18 or 20 hands, and go out for six weeks at a time, salting their fish on board. The salt comes in barrels from Newfoundland in splendid three-masted sailing ships; they come into the inner basin and there transfer the casks to the smacks. The sailors on board all these fishing-boats seem an uncommonly nice, sober, respectable set of men, and, indeed, one does not find about these French ports many of the idle, good-for-nothing loafers one meets at

home. I have always been very fond of the French, and especially of the fisher-folk, with whom we have been much thrown when on our cruises, but I came away from Fécamp more impressed than ever with their general behaviour and industry. Nothing could exceed their politeness and friendliness to us in every way. People, from the gendarmes down to the small boys who formed a constant group of the *Beaver's* admirers on the quay, seemed anxious to do anything they could to oblige us, and without any seeking after tips, too ! Men who made fast our ropes, or rowed off in their boats to pilot us to a good berth, would afterwards raise their hats and hastily make off without any of that well-known and well-understood loitering that is always the sequel to the smallest service rendered on this side of the Channel.

There is much variety in the way of things to see at Fécamp—a twelfth-century Abbey Church of great beauty ; a market held in the square, on Saturday mornings, which is one of the most animated scenes I have ever beheld in Europe. The fishing village of Yport, three miles off, should be visited ; and of course Etretat also (21 kils. by train). Then

there is the great factory of the Benedictine liqueur, with which Fécamp is associated in most people's minds. It is not now made by the monks, but by a company to whom the secret of its manufacture was passed over by the Brothers, together with all the old relics of their ancient monastery (of which the Abbey Church is the only building now left). They form a most interesting museum, and are shown to the visitors who get permission to go round the works. The cicerone should really keep a sharper eye on the parties he takes round, though, or some of their priceless treasures will be disappearing! I could have pocketed several jewelled missals and other tempting articles with the greatest ease, while he was discoursing at the other end of the hall. We were fortunate enough to come in for the annual race meeting, held on the most unique course I have ever seen—right at the top of the downs, and close to the lighthouse, part of the course being only about 20 yards from the edge of the cliff. It was a charming scene altogether, with golden cornfields waving in the middle, and the blue sea dotted with white sails for a background. The jockeys seemed to be all gentlemen riders, and it was

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quite ideal racing, with no rough element and no ring !

Every one paid for admission, and there was a great concourse of carriages and motors, the long queue of them, pulling up the steep ascent, recalling to our minds the " hill " during Goodwood week. A few days after this the Regatta came on, its most interesting event being the arrival of the boats which entered for the 30-mile race from Trouville. An English yacht came in first, and as the owner was not on board, the skipper, seeing our familiar blue ensign, rowed off to ask my husband to come on board and receive the prize from the Committee for him (I suppose he felt his own French would not do justice to the occasion !) ; but we were by that time impatient to make a start, and as that very evening the wind shifted round to the east for the first time for weeks, we got away immediately, warping out of the basin at 7 P.M. and sailing out to the Channel with the last of the daylight. I have sometimes thought that we are favourites with those Fates who do the string-pulling at the weather office, so fortunate have we generally been in all our long passages and important runs, and certainly in this instance we were indeed lucky,

for, after a longer spell of bad summer weather than I have ever remembered, we got as glorious a sail across as could possibly be desired. So lovely, indeed, was the night that we were disinclined to lose any of it in sleep, and the beautiful little breeze kept the sails nicely full the whole time. We watched the sun sink right down like a ball of fire into the sea, and then the moon lighted us till she too set in the west. By this time the last of the French lights (the great one of Cap d'Antifer) had twinkled down behind the line of horizon, and we were alone with the sea and the starry sky. It was a curious fact that not a single vessel passed us during the whole of the run over—we apparently had the great Channel entirely to ourselves. The dawn was a grand sight: it in truth “came up like thunder,” and doubtless portended the gale of wind which fell upon our coasts with such terrific suddenness fifteen hours later.

We made a most satisfactory landfall, sighting the Ower's light first, and then bearing away for the Wight. The land was wrapt in haze, so we were close to Spithead before we saw a fleet of battleships brought up in line, and found that a great Review was taking

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place. I don't suppose it occurred to many that the cheeky little cutter sailing in and out amongst those Leviathans was just completing an 85 miles run, and had been under way for twenty-two hours before dropping her anchor! It didn't occur either to the coastguards, who left us and our little store of D.O.M. in peace when we brought up in Portsmouth Harbour close to the powder-hulks—a nice quiet spot in which to rest after our long run. We were fortunately too tired to row out to see the illuminations, and thus avoided the drenching other people got; but the fearful squall of wind that accompanied the rain obliged the Skipper to turn out in his oilskins and let go a second anchor.

During the next few days the wind blew a gale, making it impossible for us to sail (or even, for one whole day, to row ashore), and we did not cease to congratulate ourselves on getting over so well. A more wretched season than that I do not think any one can recall, and whether it was the volcanic eruptions in the West Indies that upset the weather's temper, or whatever else it might have been, I trust it will remain a record-holder, or yachting will become an unpopular sport! Had we

only foreseen that long spell of cold, strong north winds, we should, of course, have gone to Devonshire instead of France, as there we should have been all the time under the lee of the land ; but one never knows what is in store for one on a cruise, and perhaps the uncertainty of sailing is not quite devoid of a certain charm of its own ?

CHAPTER IV

A SHORT CRUISE ON THE SOUTH COAST

A VERY limited time was at our disposal for a cruise during the summer's beautiful weather—just sufficient only to properly stretch the brand-new suit of sails for which we had been putting pennies into our money-box all the winter, and in which our little four-tonner made her *début* from her snug mud berth off App's yard at Bosham.

“Bosham!” say you. “What a name! Wherever is it?” And should you be either an artist or a sailing man who asks that question, you have still something left worth living for (though you did not think so last February, when your liver got so disordered after that influenza attack), and have still a new world to conquer if you have never yet discovered Bosham!

I do not want to give the little place away, for its charm consists in its peaceful old-world air. As yet the rampant tripper comes not



In Plock's harbour

nigh, nor his half-brother, the jerry-builder, either. It is still innocent of vulgar lodging-houses, advertisements, and placards, and (up to last summer) there were no eyesores amongst the dull red-tiled roofs and thatched cottages in the shape of sheds and barns of hideous corrugated iron—that recently introduced curse to all art and beauty. Still, I do not think Bosham will ever become a popular place to the general public : for those who want bands, parades, and bathing machines it would be wholly devoid of attraction, so that, as you and I care for none of those things, I feel I may safely tell you (in confidence) that Bosham is on Chichester Harbour, four miles from the ancient city, whose melodious cathedral chimes are distinctly audible as you lie at anchor in the creek on a still evening.

Away from that very hard in those old days, before the Norman Conquest, sailed Saxon Harold on his ill-fated visit to the Court of Normandy. The scene is represented in the Bayeux tapestry, and the church which is depicted therein is the same as that which stands there to this day, though its likeness is decidedly unrecognisable ! And down that same creek, with the last of the daylight and the

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last of the ebb, dropped about 833 years afterwards, commonplace present-day *we*, not in a wondrous ship with high gilded prow and strange-shaped sails, but in a plain seaworthy little cutter, that, in spite of her small size, had made that very run over to the French port of Barfleur, and in far better time, too, I expect, than old King Harold in his ancient vessel, that would no doubt run all very well before the wind, but would play the fool sadly when beating to windward, for want of a good modern lead keel. As daylight was closing in when we were partly down to the harbour's mouth, we anchored for the night off a quaint little spot called Thorney Island. Here the world seems to stand still, and to be much in the same state as it was when first turned out of the great factory of creation. No living thing is to be seen there but the sea-birds who haunt in thousands the ochre-coloured mud that stretches for miles at low tide along the creek banks, a gently sloping tree-clad country rising from thence to the Goodwood Downs that form the background of the picture. The only thing which here hints at the hurry and bustle of life with its noise and rush is the smoke which rises constantly from the

trees in comet-like trails in the wake of trains tearing ceaselessly up and down the main line. Every kind of sea-bird is found here. A short time ago a kingfisher flew during Sunday morning service into Thorney Island Church, and was promptly killed by a clod-hopping donkey with a stick ; but the wrath which descended upon his stupid head from the squire for this act saved the life of a second which appeared on the following Sunday, possibly to look for his lost mate ! It was here also that I believe the record shot for wild fowl was made, when in the terribly severe winter of 1855 a man laid low 103 wild geese with one shot !

The next morning with a rising tide we negotiated the bugbear of Chichester Harbour, namely, the bar at the mouth, and its bad name is the cause of this large sheet of fine sailing-ground being left almost entirely to the local boats and the trading vessels that come in regularly to Bosham, Apuldram, and Emsworth Quays. There are neither perches nor buoys to mark the edge of the very nasty East Pole Sand, but in going out you cannot keep too close to the shingle shore of Hayling Island, as the narrow channel between it and the sand-bank is deep right up to the water's

edge. When clear of the land, though, you are by no means out of the danger, as the shoals extend some way out, and there is only half a fathom at low springs on the bar, but there is a rise of $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet at high water, and vessels of 700 tons can enter then. Our boat's keel got pretty well acquainted with all those sands in her early stages of introduction to them, and even now that we know the local landmarks well we do not tempt Providence by going in or out except in fairly calm weather and with a rising tide under us. A stranger should follow a lead in, or take a pilot (any local fisherman would know all about it) from Langston Harbour, three miles to the west of Chichester, and easier of entrance, as it is well marked with buoys. A canoe or boat with a lowering mast can get round under the railway bridge from one harbour to the other without having to bother about the bar at all.

With a fresh breeze and sparkling water we sped away to Cowes, as we had planned, to be there for a few days during the annual Gala week, which is always much the same, but still with its own peculiar charm.

By the time we arrived there we felt ready to get to anchor and start our kettle going, so

made our entrance at the worst time of the whole day, as far as traffic is concerned—that is, about 5 P.M., when the excursion steamers are all going out of the harbour and the racers flying home to roost. Owing to the crowd under way we found ourselves just at the first fairway buoy in rather a tight corner, for the large Bournemouth steamer had to stop there as two more steamers were coming out, and in doing so she slewed round across the entrance, completely blocking it for a few moments, to the discomfiting of ourselves and two racing yachts sailing in just behind her. We had all to come about in a hurry, and so narrowly escaped collision, as our right-hand neighbour was about to gybe his sail over while we and our left-hand friend put our helms down.

However, we got safely in at last and found a spare berth, though it took some hunting for in that favourite place for small yachts—the edge of the Shrape Bank—where one is fairly out of the traffic and handy to the shore. We found in the night, to our cost, that we had swung a bit too far over the bank, and with many fellow-sufferers lay in the grey dawn in that most disconsolate of all attitudes,

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which tells its own tale to those who are in the know ! When that ominous stillness comes with a gradually increasing list, it brings with it the certainty born of past experience that in a few more minutes you will be able neither to sit, stand, nor lie down again in comfort till that blessed plop, plopping comes which speaks of hope and of returning waters ! And oh ! how the paraffin stove begins to leak, and how many things you have never thought of pour their contents upon the cabin floor during that tedious time of waiting to float again ! Finding that it was impossible to rest in any attitude whatever, I scrambled into some clothes, got my paints, and in a desperately uncomfortable crouching position managed to take a study of the dawn over Spithead, which I suppose in spite of the difficulties under which it was taken was fairly successful, as it ultimately had the honour of being purchased by H.M. Queen Alexandra.

The evenings on the water at Cowes are the most delightful part of the whole fête, and the scene is not easily forgotten of the dark trees and towers standing out against the golden sky, while the lights from hundreds of yachts are reflected all round you in the calm sea,



OFF COWES

and the music of bands and singing is wafted from the shore. Especially beautiful from the roads is the Castle, that famous headquarters of the Royal Yacht Squadron, whose Regatta is simply the *raison d'être* of the Cowes gathering, as every one knows. This renowned set of yachting men first became embodied under the title of the Royal Yacht Club at the Thatched House Tavern, London, in 1715. It was not till 1812 that the Club became the Royal Yacht Squadron. Their first home in Cowes was the building which is now the Gloster Hotel. Then, when the advance in modern guns and modes of warfare rendered the old Castle useless for purposes of defence, it was acquired, enlarged, and made the fine building it now is. It was built in 1528 by Henry VIII., who had seized the magnificent Abbey at Beaulieu, dating from the reign of King John, and with its stones the monarch of elastic conscience had constructed the castles of Cowes, Calshot, and Hurst. One does not care to linger very long, though, in a small boat amongst the gay throng. The extremely limited state of one's wardrobe, and the kind of clothes that must be worn when doing the work of the boat without a crew,

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make one feel indisposed to mix with those smart beings who come ashore from the large yachts in elegant and fragile apparel straight from the hands of their maids and valets, which indispensable adjuncts they have with them on board. So we soon stuffed our best white flannel and serge garments back into their kit-bag, and getting into our dear old shabby salted blue sailing clothes, ran down the Solent before a fine easterly breeze, passed the Needles at a great pace, and sped over the twelve miles of open sea that intervene between them and the mouth of Poole Harbour, where we dropped our anchor off pine-clad Branksea Island.

Then followed one of those evenings which go far towards making the whole thing so well "worth while" to the artist-sailor. Just as Convention is sitting down to dinner in the glitter of glass and electric light and the buzz of much inane talk, the world of nature is bathed in such a flood of ever-changing golds and greys and crimsons that mundane matters seem to recede far away from one's thoughts out there in the lonely creeks and the placid saffron-tinted waters. No sound is heard but the vesper song of the birds, and the wild cry of the sea-gulls, as they fly in line towards

their sleeping-places on the cliffs of Purbeck. Peace and happiness and rest seem predominant, and infect the spirit with their tone. I had paddled off up a small creek in the dinghy, and the block on which I had been trying to catch some of the tones of the hour was becoming invisible in the gathering darkness when I heard the Skipper's voice in the distance shouting something about supper (bother that supper ! it always brings one down to earth again with a run), and rowing back found that like a good man he had done my work and got the soup and chops ready cooked and the cloth laid.

There are no less than 95 miles of shore in this most extensive natural harbour, and weeks might be spent in exploring all the creeks and channels. A steam-yacht party could have a particularly good time here with an oil launch ; and although there is such a large and busy town on the north bank, the western side is as wild and out of the world as Chichester Harbour. We did not ourselves bring up where the yachts most do congregate—off the town—as our ambition is on these occasions to get to places far from railway stations, and therefore as yet lonely, so we followed up

the tortuous windings of the Wich Channel, and lay off the purple heather wilds that stretch away to the hills, on one of which stands grim old Corfe Castle, looking defiantly over the surrounding country even in death. In these days it seems difficult to realise that the dark tragedy which was enacted there by the Saxon Queen was matter of history and not a phantom of fiction, as also were the horrors of the reign of King John, when numbers of the French chivalry were tortured and starved to death in its dungeons. We walked over to it from the Wych Channel, and another day paid our respects to the curious boulder called the "Agglestone," from Redhorn Quay, up the Bran' Creek, and then came a grand breezy spray-flying sail of 21 miles to my favourite of all haunts, Lulworth Cove. The race off St. Alban's Head can be rather a caution, though not as bad as that off Portland Bill, so it is best to pass through it if possible at slack tide and then keep close to the coast.

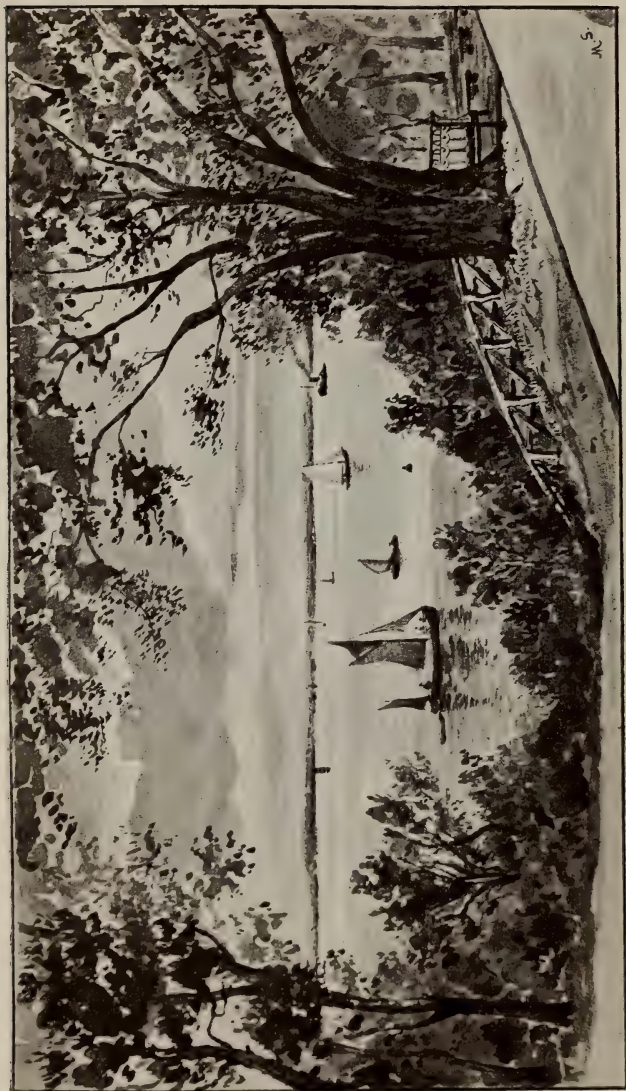
Lulworth is six miles to the west of St. Alban's Head; through a narrow division in the chalk cliffs you enter a complete basin of oval shape. The mouth is so narrow, and the white cliffs which rise inside 300 feet on end

so like those at the entrance, that it is most difficult to see it from outside. On our first visit, though we knew from the chart that it must be right in front of us as we sailed landwards, we could not see it till quite close, and then hailed it joyfully, as the evening was getting late, and a night at sea would have been the alternative of not finding it. There is no light to be seen at all, as the few fishermen's cottages are nestling in the west corner, and not visible from outside.

To lie at night in that deep water, with the waves roaring on the rocks outside, and the tall cliffs rising straight above one's mast, is to my mind well worth the risk of some discomfort; but skippers (whose souls as a rule are not very high strung) do not like the place, even call it "a beastly hole," and tell nasty tales of how it may become with a south gale a seething cauldron in which it is dangerous either to stay or to beat out. My husband shares their prejudice against the little cove, and therefore snarled ironically "I told you so," when on the fourth day, after a severe thunderstorm, a considerable sea came tumbling in from the S.E., and, breaking against the cliff, bounded back on us, so that for a whole

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evening and night we were in the greatest discomfort, and various catastrophes happened. The teapot upset just as the tea was made, and the dish of fried fish took flight on to the blue rep bunk cushion, followed by a large assortment of crockery. Sleeping was out of the question, even on the floor, and we were bruised and bumped all night, first against the cabin table, and then against the lockers till dawn came, the wind shifted to the S.W., and the cove became calm. So after a morning nap and breakfast, we got away again and made a grand homeward run of 45 miles to Cowes, where we brought up for a quiet night's sleep, thus bringing to an end a healthy and pleasant (though quite unadventurous) little August cruise on a coast that never seems to lose its charm.



THE SOLENT FROM WESTHILL

CHAPTER V

FROM THE SOLENT THROUGH HOLLAND TO THE ZUYDER ZEE

EVERYTHING seemed against us when the day came for our start ; but we had made up our minds to sail on the longest day, and if the ten plagues of Egypt had descended on the Solent in a body they would have found us under way and bound for the Dutch coast ! As it was, we got off in the tail-end of a gale that had whipped the spray over our decks as we lay at anchor in Southampton Water ; still, by mid-day the wind moderated, and the glass soon began rising at such a rate that it could only mean a foul wind coming for us, and we therefore kept sailing on from the afternoon of June 21 till 4 A.M. the following morning, when we brought up just inside the outer harbour at Newhaven for a brief rest and breakfast, after which we immediately got the anchor up again, as the change of wind was certain to come. And come it did, when we were off Eastbourne ;

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but we said, as Buller did when he crossed the Tugela, "There must be no turning back"; and we thrashed on all through that day and night, through the next day, and far into the next night, when we wearily crawled into Dover Harbour. A coastguardsman hailed us from the quay and asked the name of our boat. I replied to the question, and heard him say to his mate, "Oh! he has got a boy with him." The next question was, "Where do you come from, young feller?" I answered that also, and wondered if he would see us in the morning and find out his mistake! We slept that night the sleep that is the reward of a very short night's rest followed by forty hours on end with only one or two brief naps snatched in turns during the long sail. I must confess, indeed, that even the Sunday church-bells ringing for service did not arouse us from our slumbers! Hunger did at last, though, and the prospect of a good dinner at the Lord Warden seemed too tempting to be foregone with such fine appetites to do justice to it. On the Monday, after replenishing our stores, we had a glorious reach across to Calais, with fresh east wind necessitating just one reef in the mainsail.

Such a four hours' sail as that atones for much of the discomfort one must often put up with in small-boat cruising. We had made fast to some convenient-looking piles, and were coating the mainsail, when a stout Monsieur accosted us in his best English, saying, "Sare, you are very bad placed there," and he went on to tell us that we were close to the mouth of a drain that discharged its contents at low water. So we had to shift to another berth higher up, alongside of a large smack that had no one on board; but here again we had no peace, for we had just got off to sleep at night when a voice that was neither that of an angel nor a nightingale broke in upon our dreams, shouting hoarsely, "Monsieur! Vite! Nous partons toute suite"; and before we had time to throw on some hasty attire and come on deck the owner of our neighbouring boat had begun casting off our ropes and preparing to get under way in an impatient state of excited hurry. So for the third time we had to find another place, and in that we were left in peace till the morning. Before getting off I went ashore for fresh provisions and some of the delicious hot fried potatoes sold at the little stalls in these towns, which beat anything the

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best of restaurant *chefs* can send up in that line.

The wind continued in the east, so we had another long beat to Dunkerque, and yet another over the 23 miles that intervene between that port and Ostend, where we expected to stay some days, as we thought we should find a difficulty in tearing ourselves away from a town that has such a name as a holiday resort. A man told me once that he had been paying 30s. a night for his room alone there, but I could not get out of him what he found in the place to make the game worth the candle ; he said he didn't know, and smiled darkly, but I never got behind that smile, and my private opinion is that the sole attraction there is the gambling, which goes on freely. Many of the rich and fast world throng there on that account, and the rest follow them blindly and without reasons of their own. Unlike Monte Carlo, which possesses every natural advantage, and would still be attractive without its Casino, we summed up Ostend as follows : Hot, sandy, treeless country all round, poor bands, second-rate shops, bare shadeless *digue*, and famine prices charged for everything ; those asked by the laundress were ridiculous,

and would give points even to the Cairo hotel proprietors' demands. So we soon had enough of Ostend, and leaving it to the simpering fashion-plates who throng the parade, sailed on to Flushing, where we arrived that evening, and after the usual interview with the custom-house officer passed through the lock-gates into the canal, and continued on till dusk came upon us at the typical old Dutch town of Middelburg, with its high church tower, from which the carillon peals forth the passing hours to the country round. Though getting dark when we arrived I had to leave the Skipper to stow sails while I ran to the town for provisions, knowing that the Dutch are even stricter Sabbatarians than the Scotch, and that not so much as a crust of bread would be procurable on the morrow.

The shops and streets were crowded with girls doing their Saturday night's shopping, dressed in the quaint and picturesque dress that is still in vogue there. I found it difficult to get what I wanted, as no one there knew any language but their own, and of that I could speak not one word! However, I returned at last with my basket full, and some experience gained as to the prices of things.

Loaf-sugar is nearly a shilling per pound in our money, and everything with sugar in it is very dear. Altogether I found Holland a wretched place for shopping, and quite revelled in the Ramsgate shops when we arrived there on our return to England. When away from the large towns we had almost to live on the heavy, close-grained black bread, eggs, cheese, and eels ; milk is very cheap, but meat difficult to procure anywhere, particularly mutton, which is reserved for feasts and special occasions. Even the commonest sweets, such as peppermints, are sixpence an ounce ; and when we distributed some at one place we visited to the children who were watching us from the quay, they besieged our boat to such a degree all the next day, and made such a clamour and uproar, that we had to take a hasty departure from the town to get away from them !

In our next day's run we passed out of the Middelburg Canal at Veere and emerged into that wonderful network of creeks and estuaries which lies between that place and Helvoetsluis. The channels are all well marked, and if the chart be carefully studied the whole time no mistake need be made. From Helvoetsluis we

passed through the Voorne Canal into the river Maas and up that to Rotterdam. Everywhere we stopped a crowd collected to look at us, peering down through the skylight, and even venturing on deck sometimes till invited to withdraw to a more respectful distance. In one place a man must have made quite a nice little sum by rowing people out to the stern of our boat, from which they could gaze into the cabin and see us at tea. No doubt the little place looked cosy in the red light of our silk lamp-shade, with the blue and white china tea-things on the table and the fish frying on the stove close to us. The boat came backwards and forwards all the evening with its complement of passengers, and I can only hope they considered the show worth the money! The Dutch boats are all so immensely heavy and substantial that our little craft looked quite fragile and fairylike by the side of them.

Though Holland is such a grand place for sailing, you rarely find a Dutch yacht, and I never remember once seeing a lady in a boat, though the wives of the bargemen are very good helpmeets to them in their work, and can steer and make ropes fast as well as their husbands. The whole race are the plainest

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set of people I have seen in any country. One seldom notes a pretty face amongst the young women, but the old are all without a redeeming point, their figures either as straight and flat as a deal board or as substantial and shapeless as a tub—no happy medium. The men were also left in the cold when beauty was served out, and there is a great family likeness between them all.

From Rotterdam we pursued our way by river canal and mere to Amsterdam, bringing up for each night among the reeds and rushes or mooring to some village quay. Nothing shows one the country better than this slow sailing through the heart of it. Amsterdam is an immense city and, from the canal in which we were lying, an evil-smelling one; in fact, I thought it would equal any Oriental town in the odour line that I have ever been in! The boys and children are very rude and noisy there, as, indeed, everywhere in Holland. A large crowd of them, being amused at my yachting-cap, followed me one day through the streets shouting at my heels. I took no notice of them until a big boy tried to snatch a button off the back of my coat, and that I thought going a bit too far, so I turned

hastily round and smashed the handle of my umbrella over his head, at which he turned and fled, howling lustily, and the remaining children continued looking from the other side of the street. The stone-throwing propensities of these unruly urchins, too, is a well-known bugbear to the yachtsman in Holland, skylights being frequently broken as a joke by the boys.

A 50-mile run up the great North Holland Ship Canal brought us past the celebrated cheese-making town of Alkmaar to the Helder, where we passed through the canal-gates out into the shallow waters of that curious little land-locked sea that we had been steering for all along—the Zuyder Zee. Away to the N.E. we saw the Texel, and should like to have continued the cruise along that group of islands which fringe the coast of Friesland like a necklace of pearls, but time was running along, and we had much to see before turning again into the homeward waterways, so had to leave them regretfully out of our programme.

CHAPTER VI

SAILING ON THE ZUYDER ZEE AND HOMEWARD

AFTER our long water journey with the little Zuyder Zee in our minds as the goal, we felt a thrill of triumph and satisfaction when first we set our sails on its shimmering waves. A long afternoon's run, in very light wind, was our first experience; we found the channels were well marked with buoys and perches, and, by careful attention to the chart, had no difficulty in keeping to the right track. At 5.30 we passed the island of Weirengen, and soon after saw the lofty church tower of Medemblick rise out of the sea, followed by tree-tops and house-roofs in the way which is peculiar to the Zuyder Zee. As this port was to be our resting-place for the night, we ran into it, and brought up alongside a large fishing-smack, and most of the population of the town immediately came to the quay to gaze at us. The men looked with amaze-



*Making for port
Zuyder Zee*



Water Tower. Hoorn

ON THE ZUYDER ZEE

ment at (to their eyes) the queer, fragile little craft we had come in, so unlike their own thick, solid, heavy boats, with their immense round stems, but the women seemed more interested in "De Frau."

Our neighbour the fisherman sold us some fish and helped us to make fast, in return for which we invited him into the cabin and demoralised him with a glass of grog. Alas ! later on we repented of our hospitality, and found we had not been entertaining an angel unawares, for at 11 P.M. he favoured us with another visit in a state which soon made us aware that our glass of grog was not the last he had tasted.

We had already retired to rest when we heard an incoherent gabbling of Dutch outside, and, as we took no notice, he proceeded to come on board. Twice was he assisted in a hasty and precipitate return to his own boat ; the third time he roused us he got two buckets of water over his boots and legs, which quieted him down for a bit ; but just as we were going off to sleep he boarded us for the fourth time, and then we could stand it no longer, so we clapped on some hasty attire, let go the ropes, and, after our friend had been pitched uncere-

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moniously back on to his own deck, we towed over to the other side of the harbour, and finished the night there.

The following run was over to the Friesland coast in the most absolutely perfect weather that a summer's day is capable of. We meant to go into the small harbour of a town called Stavoren, but when we arrived off its entrance we found the wind was right in, and if in the same quarter the next day would necessitate a beat out of the narrow channel. There was too much sea running to admit of our landing in the dinghy, had we anchored in the open, and, moreover, the town looked most uninteresting, so we put our helm down and made for the island of Urk, that little spot in the sea which had always excited our curiosity.

When we got off its harbour mouth, we found it absolutely blocked with fishing-boats packed together like sardines in a box. It was getting late by the time we arrived, and was Saturday night, which accounted for their presence there, as the Dutch are strict Sabbatharians, and always congregate at their respective home ports for the Sunday's rest. There was literally not room for one more craft, so we brought up outside, and very

pretty the place looked from the water, with its forest of masts in the harbour, and rows of stiff trees all round the red-roofed village. We did not land till the next afternoon, and then had a curious and unpleasant experience, for no sooner had we left the dinghy than an immense crowd of rough unruly lads and girls collected and ran at our heels, jeering and laughing at us, stumbling up against us, and even trying, like my boy at Amsterdam, to pull the buttons of our coats. As their numbers increased, and they became more and more boisterous and unmanageable, we were obliged to give up all idea of exploring the place and beat an inglorious retreat back to our boat, and I really don't know what would have happened if the lighthouse-keepers had not come to our assistance, and laid about them with a couple of sticks, for the boys near us had begun trying to snatch off our hats, and those further away had started throwing stones in our direction !

Visitors to this isle from the outside world are rare, and I suppose we looked curious objects to them in our modern garb, for they themselves were attired in their Sunday best, and might have walked straight out of a sixteenth-century picture. The boys and men

wore full black knickerbockers drawn in at the ankles, their coats fastened with beautiful silver buckles, and long ribbons flying from their hats. The girls and women had on close caps with quaint gold and silver ornaments, huge ruffles, and very full skirts, stiffened out in the Elizabethan fashion, the small girls of six being garbed just like their mothers. Few men were visible, as most of them were taking their Sunday sleep when we landed, and on a week-day these rough youths would be out with their fathers fishing off the Texel, so I would advise other visitors to avoid the Sabbath for inspecting Urk!

Long before dawn the boats began to come out of the harbour in a string, their black forms passing us like shadows just discernible in the darkness. Why they made such a very early start we did not know, but we thought of the lively time we should have had if we had been amongst them in the harbour. First one neighbour and then the other casting us off, and warping out from us would not have been conducive to a quiet night's sleep. The day broke wild and stormy, with such a nasty sea increasing every minute that the Skipper did not like to stop any longer in such shallow

anchorage, so he called to me to get up at once to assist in getting off; indeed, I had only a few minutes in which to throw on some things with an oilskin and sou'-wester before I was required to reef the mainsail while the jib was being set and the anchor hauled up. By this time heavy breakers were drenching the boat with spray, and it had come on to rain hard. Enkhuizen, for which we were making, is only eleven miles from Urk, but it was dead to windward, and, moreover, we had to go a great deal further to avoid a large sandbank, so we were sailing from 3.30 A.M. till 10 before we got into still waters, and were able to start breakfast, which was highly appreciated by that time, especially the last of the fine eels we had bought from the old reprobate at Medemblick.

In the sixteenth century this place had a population of 70,000 people, and was larger than Amsterdam. Now it has shrunk to 6000 inhabitants, but there are no ruined houses or other signs of decay, and the only token of its former size is found in its enormous church, which must form a melancholy spectacle on Sundays with its hundreds of empty seats. It was still blowing half a gale the

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next morning, but a little of these sleepy old "dead cities" goes a long way, and we felt that we really could *not* put in another day at Enkhuizen, so started under very snug canvas and thrashed through a shower-bath of spray and short wet seas to Hoorn, where we brought up in the snug little harbour right under the celebrated water-tower, the sight of which led us to expect all sorts of beauties and antiquities in the town, which, however, on investigation of it later on proved to be an altogether erroneous inference, for its architectural treasures chiefly begin and end with the water-tower! Like Enkhuizen, its day lies in the bygone centuries, but its colossal church, with solid brick tower and open iron-work top, remains to proclaim to the people of to-day that if its departed thousands have gone down the broad road that leads to destruction it was not because they were unprovided with the means of grace.

The drainage system at Hoorn must be very defective, for in the matter of evil odours I think our berth there would beat even the Jewish quarters in certain Moorish towns I have visited, which I had thought till then were qualified to hold the championship of the world in that line,

but away from the harbour the streets are clean enough. The curio-hunter would find a lot of quaint silver articles and old Dutch blue china in the shops there. I saw some little pots in a humble-looking shop which I thought very like some I had bought at Liberty's for about 9d. each, so I thought I would take back half-a-dozen as small souvenirs to friends "from the Zuyder Zee," but when I asked the price, the man replied "Two Englishpounds each." I laughed at what I thought his funny mistake about our money, and tried him with a guelder (1s. 8d.) for two. But he went to his money-box, and from the depths of it brought out two of our sovereigns, which he placed by the side of one of his absurd little vases, and I threw up my hands in horror, and fled the shop, wondering what people can see in the stuff that they should be ready to give that for it! Our way from Hoorn led us past the island of Marken, which is quite the show-place of the Zuyder Zee, as excursion steamers take tourists out there from Amsterdam, so we ought, of course, to have stopped there, but we didn't — first, because we had had enough of the island manners and customs of the Zuyder Zee, though, I suppose, the

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Markenites, being used to outsiders, are more polite and civilised than the Urk roughs ; and, secondly, because the island did not look the least inviting, as we sailed through the Gond-Zee, close past it, with its stiff line of houses, unbroken by any trees or verdure.

When darkness overtook us we brought up under the lee of one of the three artificial islands which are near the great lock, and on which are the guiding lights for it, and the next morning we said farewell to the Zuyder Zee, and passed through the massive gates and out into the River Y. Some idea of their power may be realised when it is understood that the entire safety of Amsterdam depends on them, as the level of the sea is higher than that of the river on which the town stands. We went into the yacht harbour at Amsterdam, which has a landing-stage and club-house. The town looks its best from the Y ; it is often called the "Northern Venice," but in my opinion it is a sorry compliment to the Bride of the Adriatic, with her golden domes and stately palaces, though there is a vast wealth of art and beauty in the Dutch capital, and one can but smile at Mr. Kruger, who, I understand, on his visit there found nothing

that excited his admiration but an heraldic device, carved by the *chef* out of a turnip and used to ornament the dinner-table ; but then I do not think the late ex-President of the Transvaal ever posed as a lover of the fine arts !

It is a thousand pities the main canal is not a fine large one like that of Venice. We were detained for sixteen hours when we got to the railway bridge that crosses it, as something had gone wrong and they could not get it to swing. By the time, therefore (4 A.M.), that it did open, there was a condensed block of barges and all kinds of craft waiting to pass through, and we were seven hours slowly poling along in one compact mass ; very tedious, and we all came to grief more or less in the struggle and crush. The boat got a bump on her taffrail which has left a dent to this day, I pinched my fingers, and the Skipper, in his strenuous efforts, broke the boat-hook and fell headlong on to his neighbour's schuyt ! However, we all emerged at last on to the broader waters of the river, and were able to set our sails again, homeward bound.

As we were in a sailing-boat with a non-lowering mast we had no alternative route for our return journey unless we had gone down

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the Y to Yminden and from thence across the North Sea to England, but a little steamer could have varied the route by taking the fine canal which passes through Haarlem and Delft to Rotterdam, or could have made her way from Haarlem to Dordrecht, and thence *via* Antwerp by canal the whole way to Calais, thus having only the shortest possible passage across Channel to face. However, neither of these routes being available for us on account of fixed railway bridges, we merely retraced each stage of the voyage out, starting often at dawn to catch the tide, which must be carefully considered in all these estuaries, and bringing up for each night—sometimes alongside the quay of a little town and at others amid the sedges and reeds of quiet rivers. Always before us were the same typical scenes that remain in the mind's eye afterwards like little pictures of Holland—flat stretches of marsh-land with cattle grazing and windmills revolving in all directions, the back gardens of prim little houses running down to the water's edge, with women in them hard at work beating rugs, scrubbing and scouring everything that comes in their way, even the stone steps which lead down to the water's edge.

Often one solitary sheep is noticed tethered to a little grass plot. That is the Dutch version of the "fatted calf." Mutton is only eaten on grand occasions. The sheep will end its career at the great feast of a Christmas or wedding gathering.

The monotony of canal sailing is frequently broken by the passage through the raised bridge of some foot-road. Before you approach the bridge-keeper yells out the toll (2d. or 3d.), and as you pass he swings towards you a receptacle (generally a wooden shoe) dangling on a string from a pole. You drop the toll in as you pass and he calls out a greeting. "Gooda-night, lady," said one man gravely to me as we passed at mid-day. "Gooda-night," I gravely replied, and he continues to swagger on his English. A small harbour due is charged at some ports—those on the Zuyder Zee, for instance—but the whole cost of dues and tolls is not a heavy item of expense.

The country is absolutely ideal for small-boat yachting. Only twice during our cruise had we to hire a horse for a tow, though often we were a long time working up a canal or river by short boards, and sometimes when there was no wind the Skipper towed while I

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steered and poled, but in a little steamer nothing need ever stop the voyage or cause a difficulty. Even small launches might be taken over on the deck of a steamer and provide a grand means of holiday enjoyment. The General Steam Navigation Company and the Batavier Line (Custom House Quays) take boats from London, and the Dawson Bros. ship them from Southampton, the average cost being 5s. per "foot run." The farmhouses and even cottages are generally so clean that if the boat was too small for sleeping accommodation a night's lodging even in most primitive places might generally be ventured on with impunity. The Dutch Government are doing all they can now to encourage tourists and yachtsmen to visit the country, and with this aim in view have established an Inquiry Bureau at the Hague (Lange Voorhaut 45, Hague), where if the manager of the Central Bureau is written to all information respecting hotels and other matters will be imparted.

The estuaries are all so well marked that it is surprising, even when threading tortuous channels, how seldom one gets aground if strict attention is paid to the chart, but there is often a tiresome delay waiting for the railway



WAREHAM. POOLE HARBOUR

bridges to lift, and as they only remain open for a short time there is often quite a scrimmage to get through, and all hands mixed up in that require to be very well up to their work to avoid collision and damage. At Rotterdam when the bridge opens a small tug tows all the waiting vessels through free of charge, but as we arrived there just as the bridge was raised it was a bit of very smart work on the Skipper's part to run his sails down, and hitch on to the last boat just in time to get through before the bridge closed again for several hours.

After leaving Rotterdam (without stopping) we ran on to Helvetsluis for the night, and then in the morning lost two hours by taking the wrong channel and having to double back again to the island of Tien Gemüthen, where we had to bring up as the wind had fallen light. Not so next day, however, when violent squalls of rain, hail, wind, and thunder kept us moving all day from 6 A.M., when we started to catch the tide, till we brought up off Veere, which looked so interesting and imposing in the evening light that we spent the next day inspecting it; but its glory is a thing of the Middle Ages and not of to-day, when 800 poor cottagers and tradesmen alone represent the 14,000 thriving citizens

who traded with all the great cities of Europe. In the sixteenth century the proud Duke Maximilian lived here in a great castle now burnt down, and one wonders if the town will ever revive and become populous again, and the multitudes of worshippers troop back once more into the desolate forsaken aisles of that great Cathedral which has alone survived as a memento of what the town once was. At the town hall we were shown with pride two signatures which would naturally interest all of our race. They were simply "Albert Edward" and "George." The visit was paid twenty-five years ago, I think.

In our sail from Tien Gemüthen to Veere we had seen several seals, and on the route from Amsterdam had noted some storks and three of their nests, two being on churches. One or two of the names I must mention also, as they were a constant source of amusement to us. A certain quaint village's name was pronounced (though not spelt) Goose and another was called Quack, and I think even the longest Welsh word must take second place to this one of thirty-eight letters—Schuitenvoerderspatroonsvereeniging! It means something about a bargemen's society.

We were delayed for two days at Flushing waiting for the weather to calm down, and then as the glass was rising and the wind had shifted to the north we started at 8 A.M. and reached along the coast to the Wielengen Lightship, when the wind veered more to the east, and we got our topmast up and set spinnaker. The tide turned when we were passing Nieuport, but we bored against it till off Dunkerque, where we brought up in the roads at 9 P.M., having run close upon 60 miles.

Next day we had a dead beat to Calais, but all wind fell away as the tide turned against us, and we could only get into the harbour by the Skipper adopting the singular method of poling along close in shore for the last quarter of a mile in about eight feet of water. The sea was dead calm by then, or of course it would not have been possible. The run across Channel was accomplished with topsail and spinnaker, as the very light air was mostly from the south. We were becalmed for two hours, and had a bathe overboard (mainly, I think, for the credit of having swum in mid-Channel!). We made for Ramsgate Harbour, and were much disappointed at finding

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the comfortable dock there under repair and not available for yachts, drying out each tide, so we had to anchor in the outer harbour in consequence, which was not nearly so pleasant, but oh, what joy it was to get to the English provision shops again after those wretched Dutch ones, and what revelry and high living we had on board during the three days we stayed there doing some scrubbing and painting and other little jobs !

Gloriously fine weather continued for our coasting voyage back to the Wight, the sea so calm that we spent one night anchored off Brighton, and the next off Littlehampton, where we landed two friends we had picked up at Brighton. One is always watchful and fidgety, though, in these open anchorages, and the Skipper took alarm in the middle of the night at a decided downward movement of the glass, and arose then and there and began getting under way. Wind and sea soon arose too, and as I had gone on dozing I got a regular drenching in my berth from a wave which broke over the boat near the Ower's Lightship and came down through the open skylight. The daylight had come by then, and we had a fast run over the 16 miles from

the Nab to Bembridge, carrying our whole mainsail with the wind south and pretty strong. We were anchored by 6.30, and then the Skipper, having stowed all sails, finished his night's sleep while I cooked the breakfast.

CHAPTER VII

HOW WE LEFT SAILING FOR STEAM

THE Skipper should really be put on a lead whenever he goes near a yacht-yard! His mania for boats of all kinds is such that one never knows what he will bring home next. Only last summer the dinghys (including a punt he built long ago himself), having accumulated to six where most people would do with one, presented such a formidable row on the beach that even *he* thought they were a little too many, and a slight thinning down took place. So it was in this way that the foundation was laid of our going in for steam—a gradual evolution of events beginning with the Skipper's purchase, during an unguarded visit to a Cowes yard, of a Lifu steam launch, a thing he had been hankering after for some time, reading and dreaming of the blessed article's construction, and all the bag of tricks which composes its inside, till he knew as much about its anatomy and all the mysteries of its workings

as the makers. Macaulay once said that he did not think he had ever forgotten anything he had heard in his life on any subject whatever, and I think the Skipper could say the same, only I fear with this important reservation, that it applies in his case to all matters connected with machinery and boats only ! It is sufficient for him to be shown a thing once and, however intricate, it is completely mastered. Therefore, when he steamed home alone in this five horse-power launch as if he had been working steamboats all his life, I was not so surprised either at its sudden and unpremeditated appearance on the scene, or at his proficiency in the new art, as I should have been had I known him less well !

We called it the *Sandhopper*, had a good deal of fun out of it, and the impudent little wretch soon began to put the *Beaver's* nose out of joint with her master, who got more and more fascinated with the steam business. The engines were worked by a liquid fuel furnace, with which steam was generated in less than half-an-hour. There was of course only an open well in the 20 ft. concern. We took quite a voyage in her once, running from Yarmouth, I.W., right up to Bosham at the

top of Chichester Harbour (46 miles), and after a night with friends returning the next day through the back of the harbours instead of the outside route by Spithead—going up the Emsworth Channel into Langston Harbour, from thence under the road and railway bridges into Portsmouth Harbour, and so out into the Solent. On another occasion the Skipper took her alone one evening down to Poole, but this was a risky business, for though the evening was calm when he started, a fresh breeze sprang up from the S.E., and there was a nasty sea running on the bar in the darkness. He admits to being glad when he got safely inside, and dropped his anchor at about midnight under Branksea Castle, where he slept in the well under the stars as best he could until morning.

So these experiments with the *Sandhopper* led up to the sale of the *Beaver* and the little launch herself, and the laying of the *Pipefish's* keel on the Skipper's own design at the Lifu Co.'s yard—then at Hamworthy, Poole, now at Bitterne, Southampton. She was launched with great éclat, in the presence of a large company of friends who had come from afar to lunch with us first at Poole, the christening ceremony being performed by the Skipper's

youngest sister. I may here mention that the change from sailing to steam was the Skipper's fancy entirely and not mine. I have never varied in my allegiance to and love of the sail-propelled boats, and think the more mechanical sport a poor thing in comparison—but mutiny has never been encouraged on the Skipper's boats, and the crew knows its place!

The boat herself has been thoroughly satisfactory, and a credit to her designer and her builders alike. I have never been into such a tight vessel both over head and under foot. There is rarely a drop of bilge-water to pump out, and hardly any comes through decks or skylight, either in the severe test of a heavy sea-way or in drenching rain. The engines also have been quite satisfactory (as indeed they ought to be, the material used being of the best), but the Lifu Co.'s copper water-tube boiler has given constant trouble, spoilt the best part of one summer's cruising for us, and on three other occasions landed us in difficulties, as will be seen in the succeeding chapters.

These are the boat's dimensions. She is 11 tons, built of teak and elm throughout. Her

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length is 41 ft. Beam, 8 ft. 6 in. Depth from garboard to top of sheer strake, 5 ft. 3 in. Draught of water, 4 ft. 1 in. Ballast (lead), 2 tons 3 cwt. 1 lb. Copper oil tank, 69 gals. ; weight (empty), 125 lbs. Coal in bunkers, $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons. Water tanks, 150 gals. Weight of two boiler tanks of copper (empty), 136 lbs. Compound engines, 25 h.p. Steam pressure up to 250 lbs. Water-tube boiler, steel drum, copper tubes, delta metal unions, boiler metal alloy downtakes and multiples. Force draught with fan. Worthington donkey pump.

It will be seen that she is fitted both for liquid fuel and coal, but we never now use the former, as we do not find it so satisfactory in this much larger boat as it was in the launch. The burners constantly choked and got out of order, and the expense of running by the paraffin was ruinous, so we keep to coal fuel, and put up with the extra long time that it takes to get steam by this method.

The saloon and fo'castle are as cosy, I think, as a small boat's limited accommodation could possibly be, and every comfort is packed into the small space that it will hold, even to a folding washstand like a liner's, a cupboard with long looking-glass in it, a little Turkey

carpet on the floor, and a table that will swing when required. The walls are covered with peacock blue art tapestry let into frames, the coaming is ornamented with the crew's china paintings (the best, as they never mind damp) in dark frames, and other things. The horse-hair seat cushions are of peacock rep with tomato-red silk sofa cushions, lamp-shade, &c., the doors have panels of hammered copper (the Skipper's winter work), and all the shelves are decorated, by the same hand, with carvings and turned pillars and little curtains of artistic colours. The well seats are covered with red canvas cushions, and there is a cover to it which forms a complete hood in rough or wet weather, so that the cabin doors can be left open at night, and the rain will penetrate neither into the cabin nor even into the well, whilst in fine weather the hood can be unlaced and turned completely back. There are two ports in the fo'castle and a fore-hatch, and the skylight in the saloon has a telltale compass in it.

With these few outlines the details can, I think, be filled in by all those who know the ways of small yachts.

CHAPTER VIII

CRUISING IN HOME WATERS IN THE *PIPEFISH*

I HAVE stated in the previous chapter all about the construction of our little vessel (and have put it in a chapter apart so that the average reader, uninterested in such matters, can neatly skip it!), and will now proceed with our cruises in her, though indeed they consist principally of dodging about in those charming south coast creeks and rivers which cannot, I feel sure, be beaten or indeed equalled anywhere for quiet, restful holiday yachting—safe, sure anchorages combined with a great variety of pleasing and beautiful scenery, and plenty of good towns available in all the lovely natural harbours.

For rough weather our favourite little spot is, I think, on the river Frome close to the delightful old-world town of Wareham with its grass-grown Danish ramparts almost surrounding it, and the beautiful stone bridge spanning the river on the road to Corfe—that

On the Sussex coast

M.S.



road along which in its wilder and more primitive state the Saxon King's murdered body was brought on that eventful day of the ruined Castle's history, and laid to rest temporarily in the church by the river till a more fitting sepulchre was found for it in Winchester Cathedral.

I have called it a rough-weather anchorage because, however unpleasant more open waters may be in the periods of storms and gales, up there is peace and quiet, and the landing at the town quay unaffected by weather. We moor stern and stem close to the reedy bank, and are just not too deep or too large to do so, and to turn without grounding. Rough weather is not the only time for Wareham, though ; no place is more inviting to the artist, and a summer's afternoon in the dinghy far up above the town amongst the fragrant water-flowers and the scented meadows wherein the cows stand knee-deep in grass brings into the racket and stress of present-day life the idyllic breath of a poem—just a faint flavour of which must appeal sometimes to even the most matter-of-fact individual.

After a prolonged spell in Poole Harbour during some holiday weeks on board we had a

fine run up through the Solent to Portsmouth Harbour, where we brought up in the Fareham Channel not far from the town, as it is almost the only place now left where you can lie in peace, and be safe from fouling heavy mooring chains laid down by the Government, and other worries of that sort. Then one fine morning we slipped off for Bembridge, the Nab, and the Ower's, bound for an exploring expedition to the Arun. There is a nasty bar to this river which is entered at Littlehampton, therefore on no account should it be attempted anywhere near low water ; indeed at low water springs there is only a foot at one spot. Inside there is plenty of water for boats to lie afloat at the quays at all times, and as large trading schooners are met there it is evident that no difficulty exists about the entrance if only the right state of the tide is considered. Vessels 105 ft. long and drawing 14 ft. can go up to Arundel. It is a charming little inland run of six miles, and then further progress is barred to all large boats by a bridge, under which we managed to get quite easily after lowering our mast, and followed up the tortuous windings of the river for another two miles till we anchored in a surprising depth of water under the steep,

woodclad heights above a well-known little inn called "The Black Rabbit." We remained some days there.

The view of Arundel Castle is most imposing from that spot, and the walks all round are delightful, as the Duke of Norfolk kindly allows the public to walk over a large portion of his princely domain, to take tea at one of his lodges, and share their meal with his beautiful peacocks. Before leaving the Arun we went a few miles higher up till we could only with difficulty turn the boat round, and then steamed right down, out into the sea again at Littlehampton, westward past the Mixen Beacon through the racing tide in the Looe Channel for Chichester. But when off there the light failed us and we thought it unsafe to try for that blind entrance, so held on, got up our side-lights, made for Southampton Water, and narrowly missed on the way there smashing into a great iron buoy—one of the greatest dangers that steaming in the dark offers to vessels about Spithead and all that part of the Solent. We only just scraped past it without touching. Brought up inside Calshot at about 11 P.M.

It was soon after this that an accident hap-

pened which might have been serious had it occurred in a less convenient spot. We had just come down from Cowes in a strong wind and heavy sea, and were at the narrow entrance to little Oxey Creek between the Lymington river and Hurst Castle when a terrific bang was heard, and all the steam immediately poured out through the skylight, funnel, and ventilators, the boat immediately losing way. The Skipper yelled to me to try and keep her straight while he darted forward for the jib, ran it up, and just managed to get her head off before she ran on to the mud, where we should have remained fast, as the tide was falling. While holding the tiller hard up with one hand I was busy with a wet mop in the other, quenching some of the burning coals that were fizzling all over the floors of the engine-room and well.

We ran a little way up the creek, dropped our anchor, and then began to inspect the damage done by this sudden catastrophe, that had all happened almost before we had time to take in what really was the matter. Action has to be so prompt in such cases that thought, except in relation to it, seems suspended for a while. It was caused by the exploding of one of these

wretched copper boiler tubes, through which in a moment all the steam rushed. The force of the explosion had burst open the furnace door and thrown all the fire out into the engine-room ; the floor-cloth was of course ruined, over one hundred holes being burnt in it, every glass in the skylight was cracked, the Skipper, who was in the well (most fortunately not in the engine-room), was as black as a sweep with the débris thrown over him, and had a burn on his leg and another on his arm, and the whole boat was in an indescribable state of mess. He knew at once what had happened, for though this was my first experience of the joke it was not his, the same thing having happened some months before in the Beaulieu river. On that occasion also he was providentially at the exit end of the engine-room, but he got several small burns, and in dipping his leg over the side to wet his flannel trousers, which were smouldering round the ankle, he fell overboard, but managed to claw hold of the dinghy and to climb into her, and so back on board as the *Pipefish* slowly drifted on in a cloud of steam. With the assistance of two young men who were with him, the boat was rowed and sailed back somehow, arriving in the

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small hours of the morning. The boiler of course was got out and a man from the Lifu Company came over and fitted a new tube, being unable to account for the accident except by saying that the tube must have been a faulty piece of copper from the first, and that the event was a most extraordinary one, and would probably never happen again. However, there we were only a short time afterwards, landed helpless in Oxey Creek, and thanking our stars that the explosion had not left us rolling about in the rough sea that we had only just come out of in the Solent, or that the Skipper had not been stoking the fire at the time, when he would probably have been blinded for life and seriously burnt.

A friend from Yarmouth came over two days afterwards and towed us back with his steam launch, and the Lifu manager came up from Poole with a brilliant idea as to the cause, which had, strange to say, only just entered into his head! In the drum of the boiler are several zinc plates placed there to disintegrate, and by so doing neutralise a certain slow galvanic action which takes place owing to the boiler being formed of different materials—copper, steel, delta metal, and alloy. Small

pieces of zinc had penetrated into the tube, choked it, and thus caused the explosion. The Skipper, never having been told that such things were in the boiler, naturally was not on the look-out for them, but the astounding thing is, that the accident had to happen twice before the Lifu people guessed what was wrong. An examination proved that the zinc plates were all to pieces. The boiler was taken out, all the tubes cleaned and tested, and of course, the state of the plates' health is a matter of careful supervision by the Skipper ever since. The only excuse the Lifu Company offered for their carelessness was that they never expected the plates to decay so soon.

One of the most exciting times we ever had in the *Pipefish* was after a run up from Poole, when we got belated and overtaken by the darkness, entering the Solent about 9.30 P.M. to find ourselves mixed up in one of the biggest night attacks that has ever taken place there, the Duke of Connaught and other notabilities having come down on purpose to see it. A strong ebb was running, which made our progress very slow, and I got quite alarmed, and thought we should

never get through. To paraphrase, it was really a case of—

“Cannon to right of us,
Cannon to left of us,
Cannon in front of us,
Volleyed and thundered.”

Heavy guns were firing from Hurst, from Cliff End, from the Needles fort, from a gunship. The noise was deafening, and blinding searchlights converged on us from various directions, so that I could not see the light on the Warden Ledge Buoy. To make matters worse, the Skipper kept down in the engine-room piling on the coals to keep the boat moving against the tide, and I was left to steer as best I could, with the black shapes of destroyers and torpedo-boats showing no lights whatever crossing our bows and running up behind us continually. I yelled to the Skipper, “Do come out, here’s another destroyer close to us; she’s coming right at us.”

“Never mind her,” he replied laconically. “She’s got no lights, and we have. If she runs us down she’ll have to pay for us.”

“Small good that’ll do us,” I growled; “we’re in a pretty tight corner.”

“Capital fun !” he answered. “ I’ve always wanted to see it closer.”

It was a bit too exciting to please me, and I was very glad when at last we got through the bewildering turmoil, and just as it ended groped our way into the Lymington river for the night. To make the Inferno complete a heavy thunderstorm was going on behind us over the sea, and came up rapidly after the guns ceased, and kept the cannonade going for a long time. An officer told me afterwards they had been astonished at the searchlight revealing our small white boat in the thick of it all, with apparently only one woman on board standing with flying veil and cloak alone at the tiller !

CHAPTER IX

THE *PIPEFISH* "GOES FOREIGN"

THE miserable weather of the summer of 1910 made the *Pipefish*'s first cruise across Channel little more than a sampling of everything the fates can produce against yachting, and this combined with a disaster on her own account turned our tour rather into a fiasco. Still, so much of the sport consists in a facing of contretemps that a sympathetic interest may be taken even in this, so here it is ! The aeroplane week at Bournemouth, coming as it did shortly after our holiday commenced, was too great an attraction to be omitted from our plans, and as the preceding few days found us in our beloved Chichester Harbour, it was from there that we made for Poole, on one of the few really grand days that were allotted to us. We had about the finest run in our experience, leaving the Apuldram Creek early and bringing up for breakfast near the mouth of the harbour. Then right

outside the Wight after some time we caught the westerly-going ebb, and with the two sails doing their best to help, and drawing well with a fresh south-easterly breeze, we sluiced past St. Catherine's and the fine chalk downs near the Needles, raced across the wide bay to Old Harry, and dropped our anchor off Poole town at 5 P.M.

There was a concourse of yachts there drawn by the same attraction; amongst others near us was the *Santa Maria*, which three days later was destined to have her flag at half-mast, and her owner, Lord Llangattock, plunged into terrible sorrow over the lamentable death of his son, poor Rolls, the greatest pioneer of aerial navigation England has produced. He flew gaily over our heads on the Monday, and the next day his name was joined to that terribly long and increasing list of strong, brave men who are giving their lives in the furtherance of this most dangerous sport. I call it that, and I cannot see how it can ever be made to serve any *really* good and useful purpose in the world. The day may come when these words will be obsolete, and amusing to a future generation, but I think that time is still somewhat distant, and at

present I feel that the solid earth (and ocean) are good enough for me !

We really seemed to be in for a fine spell of weather when we dropped down to the south deep with the last of the ebb on the Tuesday evening, and a glorious sunset was succeeded by a moonlit night and a hazy but beautiful dawn. The glass was not very high, but everything else looked favourable, and we were astir at 4 A.M. lighting the fire, getting breakfast, preparing lunch for the voyage, filling the binnacle lamp, putting the chart ready to hand, and generally snuggling down for a long run in the open. At 9.15 we were off down the harbour, and when clear of Old Harry threw over the patent log. The wind was S.E., which kept rather a fresh, tiresome sea running all day that checked the boat's pace considerably, and we soon lost sight of the land in the thick haze, and had to keep an eye of watchful and unremitting attention on the proper point in the compass.

Every two hours the monotony of the voyage was broken by hauling in the log and measuring off the mileage on the chart, but it seemed a long time before we ticked off 54 miles and knew that we should be well within sight of

our destination, yet not one glimpse of France came through the thick haze to cheer us, and it gradually dawned upon me that the line of horizon visible was rapidly contracting, and that as the sun sank lower the haze was turning to a dense sea-fog! So tired was I getting and so anxious to get in that I didn't dare to put into words my secret conviction, but it occurred to me the Skipper was rather silent, and sure enough when I came up from preparing tea there it was all round us, a hateful dense white fog as thick as wool running along the waters all round the boat, blotting out the sun and bringing that blind, helpless feeling on one that always accompanies it. Had we just been able first to pick up the coast and recognise our position matters would have been simplified, but as it was we knew we must be close to the land by the distance run, yet had nothing to depend on but the Skipper's own reckoning, and therefore to proceed at any pace into that blind white wall was dangerous. Well, the last thing we wanted to do was to turn round and make for England or mid-Channel again, so we held slowly on, stopping every few minutes to listen for the syren on Barfleur Lighthouse and blowing our own whistle con-

tinually. At length to our great relief a little lifting of the curtain came, the masses of light fleece rolled away ahead, and through it we saw land, and (triumph!) Cherbourg Breakwater a little on our port bow.

By this time twilight was coming on, and a strong tide had to be stemmed, as we had got down a bit to the westward with our slow progress and frequent stops, so it was some time before we groped in through the welcome harbour entrance and got to anchor well up near the town at 10 P.M. All that night the fog was as dense as it could be, and it was still there next day, coming and going all the time that we steamed along the coast, which was just visible for most of the voyage, though at others vanishing altogether. Still, by keeping the compass course strictly we groped along from one buoy to another, got temporary glimpses of the lighthouses of Cap Levi and Barfleur, and finally put into the outer harbour at St. Vaaste, where we thought to find shelter under Tattahou Island, but the wind was so inconsiderate as to veer right round into the N.E. during the night, which gave us a most uncomfortable rolling, particularly as it increased considerably. It was as thick as ever,

too, and the glass was going down in spite of the north in the wind, so we got up anchor and ran for the shelter of the inner harbour, in which were a goodly number of large fishing-smacks. Their occupants received us with most obliging hospitality, showed us where we could lie afloat—just at one little deep spot—and even shifted one of the smacks so that we could take her place as the outside vessel of three, and ensure the best position.

We received great kindness from these fine, good-looking Normans, who are chiefly of the real old type of our ancestors, and not the least like our usual idea of Frenchmen, being fair and florid with blue eyes. One finds them in all the old unsophisticated towns on this coast, but Cherbourg, which rose to size and fame in modern days and with the facilities of easy travel, is peopled with another race—the dark-eyed, pale-skinned men from Paris and other parts of France, the voluble light-hearted Frenchmen who are run in such a different mould from our old hardy conquerors. They all shook their heads at the look of the weather, and with good reason, for the fog continued for two days so dense that we frequently could not see the lighthouse at the

end of the breakwater, and the hooting from it went on day and night, while there was a hard N.E. wind blowing all the time—an unusual combination.

We were there for five days, and found it a much better place on closer acquaintance than we had thought it on our first visit ; the shops though so unpretentious-looking, were well supplied. As many as 2500 inhabitants are packed into the little town, and they have built a fine church with, I should say, a prophetic eye to the future growth of the place. It was interesting to see the curious old-fashioned congregation at the Sunday High Mass of respectable townspeople and peasants from the country, most of them joining in the service with a simple reverence that makes one regret more deeply than ever the wretched partitions that divide the pens one from the other in the one great fold under the One Great Shepherd ! An appeal on a printed card in the porch struck me as worth noting. It ran (translated) “Ye who come to mass, pray for the 140,000 sinners who will die to-day.” An awful thought, but a fact ; ninety-seven of us pass the border every minute !

Tuesday morning brought a lull in the wind

and a lift in the fog, with a shift of the wind to due north, so we joined a large number of our fishing friends in a general exodus from the harbour and shaped our course along the coast to Port en Bessin, 24 miles off. The harbour consists of an outer port entered between two stone piers, and then two inner basins divided from the outer port by a draw-bridge which remains open for several hours at each tide. There are no lock-gates whatever, so drying out is the order of the day, but the mud is of such a very soft nature that vessels generally sit upright.

We were just making for the entrance when I noticed that our pace had become very slow, and I called down to the Skipper to keep her going, as there was a brisk tide running to westward, and I wanted plenty of way on to stem it across the mouth of the harbour. Still we continued to crawl, and it was with some difficulty that I got her in safely, and then the Skipper came up with a long face and said something was wrong; the steam had gone down, and there must, he feared, be a leak in one of the tubes! As soon as we were made fast at the edge of the quay in the inner dock an investigation proved his fear to be justified ;

there was a decided leak going on, and we could only wonder what would have happened if it had come half-an-hour earlier, instead of just as we were arriving at our port, and had left us powerless with a rocky shore dead to leeward !

We foresaw clearly what a business we were let in for, landed in a little port, with no one but fishermen around us, not an engineer in the place, no crane, and all our confidence in the boiler completely shaken, for who would care to trust to a thing that may play such a trick at any moment? I fear what we said about the makers of the copper tubes was not in the nature of a benediction, and meanwhile a hunt in the place discovered two motor mechanics who were the best workmen we could secure for the job, and the next day with immense difficulty we hoisted the boiler out with the aid of a strong oak beam and tackle, and rested it on planks of wood laid on the engine-room beams, when the wretched little pit was found in the tube no bigger than a pin's point, but quite enough to cause the disaster. The tube had been put in only a year and a half before, when a thorough overhaul of the tubes had taken place, after the

same mishap had occurred as the Skipper was getting up steam in Yarmouth Harbour. Tubes of a thicker quality were put in then, and we were assured that they would last for years, yet—here we were !

This decided the Skipper once and for all that whatever good copper tubes might be for open launches where they can be constantly examined (we had found them all right in the little *Sandhopper*) they can't be trusted in a boat like the *Pipefish*, so before telegraphing to England for a new tube he thought he would run over to Cherbourg, where there is a famous firm of engineers and boiler-makers, to see if he could possibly procure a set of steel tubes that would do for our boat. Consequently he departed the next day at 9 A.M. by the little steam tram for the roundabout journey to Cherbourg *via* Bayeux, leaving me in charge for the day, and I had rather an anxious time, as the boat took the ground for two or three hours, and must needs go and list right over in spite of all my precautions !

The day before a boy had foolishly twisted our stern rope round the stone post to which it was made fast, so that had it not been discovered in time, when the boat sank with the

tide and the rope stretched out, it would have parted with the strain. I therefore climbed the iron ladder up the stone dock and tied black worsteds round each rope at the edge of the quay, so that as long as they were visible I could know the rope had not been tampered with, then as she sank I adjusted an oar and the boat-hook the Skipper had rigged up to keep her off the wall and lying in the lair of a large boat that had preceded us in that berth ; yet in spite of that, she grounded on the edge of it and lay over further and further—a mere discomfort at any other time, but with that horrid boiler made fast on the deck a real danger, as I feared every minute the ropes would snap and the whole heavy concern would slide off into the muddy dock. I hardly dared move for fear of starting it, and sat miserably in the cabin with my back turned to the slanting thing, and tried in vain to read and forget it for an interminable time, till the behaviour of the lamp in its gimbles cheered me with the news that the boat was beginning to sit up again.

As twilight came on I got a nice hot supper cooked for the wanderer's return—a tin of our favourite curried fowl warmed with rice and fried potatoes, and the last cherries of the year

stewed for pudding. At 8.30 the whistling of the train announced his advent, and soon after he came climbing down the ladder, having spent an interesting and enjoyable day in spite of the ceaseless rain, and having been taken all over the great factory by the manager. The search had been fruitless, though ; nothing ready-made of our size could be procured. Wouldn't he have been delighted if he had come back and found the boiler gone ! And fancy the jeers ! "Couldn't leave you alone for a day but you must let her ground and get into difficulties !" However, thanks to luck it was all right, and he laughed at the worsteds on the ropes, said it was a good idea, and we kept them there.

A wire was sent next morning to the Lifu Company for another tube, as it was thought safer to put in a fresh one than to repair the tiny speck in the faulty one, and we resigned ourselves to circumstances with the best grace we could muster, and got to know the people and the place as well as if we had been born amongst them. We had to shift our berth for some days owing to the arrival of a trading steamer—a great and most unusual event—and brought up alongside a smack on the opposite side of the harbour, where I was imprisoned

for two afternoons through not getting off before we grounded, and no ladder being available. The smell of the basin was particularly awful there, and an investigation led to the discovery of a large rotten dog-fish just under us. "Not very pleasant, in fact a little poisson-euse" (poisonous), the Skipper remarked, who is given to puns! A light sleeper has a poor time in one of these basins!—boats coming in and out at all hours of the night, early carts rattling in from the country, dogs barking on the quay perpetually, hammering beginning at daybreak often in a little ship-yard, and the bells ringing for early mass at 5 A.M. in anything but a *sotto voce* manner.

One thing I must mention which astonished me greatly on this coast, particularly at St. Vaaste—the unmistakable evidences of very mild winters here. One would have expected that facing north, and with nothing to break the force of the coldest winds, the winter climate would be severe, but on inquiry I was told a frost was a very rare thing indeed. I believe it is the Gulf Stream impinging along this part of the coast that causes it; at any rate, I saw palmettos and other delicate things as large and fine as in the Scilly Isles, red and

white fuchsias covering some of the houses at St. Vaaste, and geraniums that from their size must have been several years in the ground. This is another and strong asset that might give that town a prosperous future if properly advertised.

Of course I went to Bayeux, revelled in the fine Cathedral and quaint old buildings, and spent a long time admiring the marvellous tapestry—I suppose the most wonderful piece of work in the world, when one considers that it has defied the ravages of eight centuries. In my humble, and most certainly inexperienced opinion, it is the work of no amateur that ever lived, either man or woman. The whole thing is on too even a scale throughout, and far too good and thoughtfully planned to have been designed by any but a first-rate professional, possibly in some great eleventh-century school of art. Queen Matilda may very likely have suggested it, and may even have helped at it herself, but it was never, I am certain, designed by her and her ladies. Even the guide-book does not commit itself to more than the guarded announcement "The (so-called) Queen Matilda's Tapestry." One thing, I believe, is certain, that it was presented

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by her to the militant Bishop Otto, who fought in the Battle of Hastings, for use in the cathedral, and that it remained there safely in spite of fire and sack, and the horrors of the city's almost complete destruction after a siege, till the Revolution, when it was removed to the public library or museum.

A study of the ships depicted on it impresses one with the wonderful achievement that conquest of England by the Normans was. It cannot be realised till one has found out the difficulties of these same ports from which the invaders sailed, even in this day, when quays and harbours are constructed, and improved slip ways and means of building and launching are in vogue ; but *then*, with drying-out harbours, the great rise and fall of tide, no railway to bring stores from a distance, no cranes to assist in shipping horses, battering rams, and other ponderous implements of warfare, I cannot imagine how the vast array of cavalry and foot ever got off, nor how they ever reached England in safety in those comparatively small ships with their slow-drawing sails and their keelless hulls ! Of course, they had to land where the wind took them, and that is probably why Pevensey was

honoured—it was just where the following wind brought them from Barfleur. The landing, too, on an open beach, without any kind of pier or breakwater, must have been no joke for a large army!

There are several castles dating back to the Middle Ages to be visited in this part of Calvados. We walked over one afternoon to Huppain, the eleventh-century proud castle of the Villiers, and I was greatly interested in its remains—chapel, moat, drawbridge, and towers of colossal thickness, all incorporated into a farmhouse, the milk and cream reposing in the coolness of walls five feet thick, and the farmer's bacon boiling over the huge fireplace before which the feudal lord, whose word was law in the country, once sat and warmed his mailed fist!

Altogether we found plenty of things to do and to see during our enforced stay in the port, though we chafed at the delay, knowing it meant good-bye to our plan of a cruise up the Seine to Paris, which had been our object in crossing the Channel.

CHAPTER X

THE NORMANDY FISHERMEN'S WEEK-END

PORT-EN-BESSEN is only a little place, but it boasts of two things, and that is more than some of us can do who think ourselves so fine and have absolutely nothing that we can offer the world to our credit. First it holds up its head in the knowledge that it sends no less than 600,000 francs' worth of fish into the markets annually, and its second matter for pride is that it is the port for Bayeux, that revered elder sister only six miles off to which it looks up with affectionate awe, dwelling on the name when mentioned as if loth to leave it again. Twice a day the little steam tram that connects the towns goes whistling and snorting and ringing its bell along the tiny lines that run by the side of the high-road, and if ever a yacht does happen to enter the fishing port it is because from there the pilgrimage to the Cathedral city, which was an ancient town in the days of the Conqueror,



*"Papafish" with the
mackerel boats*

is more easily made than from any other place. Otherwise I do not think that any one would care to linger ten days (as we were obliged to do from circumstances) in Port-en-Bessin, for its dock is without lock-gates and its streets apparently drain into the dock, so that the time you spend on the mud when the tide is out is not a pleasing one to your olfactory nerves.

Here, however, a large population of hardy working people spend their lives—sturdy fishermen, who every Monday morning go lumping out into the open sea in their rough, strong boats manned by six men and boys, and come rolling back into port at each dawn. Not to rest, though, do they come, but only to land their catch: there is no rest during the week for men while fish means the life-bread of children, and gaunt women look to the boats to keep the roof over their heads. The only sleep these “toilers of the deep” get is in their rough bunks in the fo’castle, and their only luxury the pipe after their coarse and undainty meal. Yet their faces are cheerful and placid; no ambition seems to trouble them beyond that of a good haul, no longings for a wider and more intellectual

life, and as I watched them stream out to sea past the stone piers, clad in blue blouses and worsted caps, calling cheerily to one another in clear, lusty voices, I thought how little, after all, the luxury and wealth of a higher civilisation count against rude health and the contentment of that simple life which knows no other path than its allotted one !

But on every Saturday evening a short break comes in the hard routine of sea life. One and all make for their port, and crowd into it till the inner basin cannot contain another craft, and there they lie for forty-eight hours, wedged so close together that they cannot list over when they take the ground *en masse*. The mainsails are not stowed but merely "scandalised" (the tack triced up, the gaff lowered half-way down the mast, and the peak dropped), and very picturesque they look with the various colours of the canvas—some orange, amber, or dull red, others a dirty white, patched with any colour that comes first to hand. We awaited the arrival of this fleet with some misgivings, for the harbour-master had repeatedly assured us that there would be no room for us with safety anywhere, as little white yachts do not care to be crushed

between two heavy tarred fishing-boats ; but we found that the promise of a little present into one or two pockets, combined with the natural courtesy and good-nature of the fishermen, worked wonders, and a clear space was kept for us all the time.

It is evidently not the call of their religious duties that brings about the Sunday's rest in port ! From 5 A.M. sounds of hammering and planing began on many of the boats, and continued for most of the morning. New gear was fitted, nets were dried and mended, alterations and odd jobs were done. True, as half the crew were ashore they might have been at the early mass, but I saw none on the quay dressed for it, and later on the loud and insistent bell clanged its appeal in vain, for I saw no bronzed faces at High Mass. Not that the average French fisherman is without religion, but he keeps it for special occasions ; it is not a thing for the weekly routine of life with him. At the tri-annual blessing of the waters, now, or the yearly procession of the Holy Sacrament through the streets, he kneels bare-headed devoutly in the dust, but that is not a matter of ordinary occurrence. In the little seamen's chapels that stand on many

a cliff I have never seen a man praying, but the walls are in many cases nearly covered with marble tablets purchased out of the hard-earned savings. "J'ai criée Marie, elle m'as sauvé," "À Marie, en reconnaissance," and such simple inscriptions tell their own tale, and one can imagine the scene that brought that little votive offering there—the terrible night of tempest and storm, the sinking ship, and the sailor turning in the hour of despair and danger to the mystic Being whom he was taught in childhood watched over and helped poor mortals. The vow then made would be nothing, but the vow kept and the tribute given would surely count to his credit in the eyes of Him who weighs everything justly. "Tous savoir, c'est tous pardonner."

After the weekly cleaning up of boats a great silence falls upon the port, and the very dogs desert the quays for the houses, in each of which the one grand meal of the week is being eaten. Shops closed till midday reopen, and display dainties never seen on other days of the week, for have not various quaint old covered tumbrils, that might have done lugubrious duty at the Revolution, been coming into the town all the morning from Bayeux,

bringing such pastries and tarts as only a Frenchman can make, with fruits and sweetmeats of all sorts looked out for regularly as assistants for the catering of the Sunday dinner? Also a huge two-horsed van covered with a black hood all over, and displaying when its curtains are drawn an inside filled to repletion with dresses, petticoats, caps, kerchiefs, and other articles calculated to excite envy in the eyes of the lasses and lads, lumbers into the market, and has an admiring crowd hanging round it all day.

After the great meal, and during an afternoon and evening of leisure, the week-day blue-bloused sailors are almost unrecognisable in Sunday clothes, their brown faces washed and polished till they shine. Naturally there is no more working on the boats in that condition, but much singing of chorus songs in the cafés and walks on the downs with mothers, wives, and children. Strict sobriety prevails. I only saw one drunken man, and he was severely sent to Coventry by all the rest.

To go through the ordeal of marriage in Normandy would require more pluck, endurance, and patience than our more prosaic nation could contemplate, yet generally on

a Saturday some young sailor summons up courage to face the music, and I witnessed a typical one. After the ceremony, which of course takes place in the morning, the party repair to a café, and there they eat, drink cider, toast, and sing ceaselessly till midnight, with an occasional procession round the town to break the monotony. No one looks very jovial, but the choruses continue with unrelenting energy.

At 12.45 I was awakened by a curious song like a religious chant sung by the voices of both men and women. This was the bridal procession conducting the unfortunate young couple to their home at the conclusion of the long day's ordeal. Even then they were not left long in peace, for the next afternoon their relatives hunted them out again, the quaint chant recommenced, and they paraded the town once more in a party of three rows (eight in a row), linked arm in arm, and again more toasting in a café had to be gone through. The whole party looked dead tired and rather ill, yet the singing never flagged, the old mother in her white cap joining with the rest ; but this is their idea of a honeymoon.

When Monday morning comes the mass of boats disentangle themselves somehow, in

single file pass out through the narrow passage from the river basin to the outer port, and stream out to sea and toil again for another week.

Such is the life of the Normandy fisherman—a hard life with little to brighten it; yet one rarely sees a discontented face amongst these grave, simple men. And there are kind hearts beating beneath the blue blouses too, for when sometimes, after a spell of bad weather, when the white-crested waves are leaping over the stone piers and the sturdy fisherwomen cannot stand against the howling wind on the quays, one of their number fails to turn up at the weekly rendezvous, but joins another meeting instead, where Davy Jones presides, and the fish swim gaily overhead laughing at the nets which lie in a tangled heap amidst sea-weed and sand—well, the widows and orphans are not left to starve, and true sympathy lies not in words but in deeds.

CHAPTER XI

HOMEWARD BOUND AGAIN

IT was not until nearly a fortnight had elapsed that we were able to shake the dust of Port-en-Bessin from off our feet and emerge again through the stone piers of the outer port bound west once more. It had taken many days for the new tube to arrive from England, and then the weather was hopeless, with such continuous rain, that reports came of the Seine being in full flood, and almost unnavigable above Rouen. So it was partly on that account, and partly from the fact that we didn't care to trust the boiler so far away from its maker, and to risk the expense of being stranded again *hors de combat*, that we abandoned an extension of the cruise to Paris.

A really lovely morning came at last, but the glass remained obstinately low, so we knew it was only a passing fit of good humour, and thought we would get along while we could. It was with great anxiety that we kept an eye

STORMY WEATHER



on the steam after we left the port, fearing that, repaired as it had been under difficulties, all might not be well with the boiler, or that one of the other tubes might not be tight. Still, all went smoothly, and a fine head of steam was kept up, and good steady pace maintained. Owing to delay over various things, it was 3 P.M. before we got off, and our fair tide had been running for some time. We hoped to reach Cherbourg, 44 miles off, before dark, but were not destined to do so, and only scraped into that port after a very severe tussle with the elements, for the weather, after a glorious morning, rapidly clouded over during the afternoon, and the glass fell lower still. We had been doing well till we got abreast of St. Vaaste (24 miles), but before we reached Barfleur the tide had turned against us, and the outriders of the gale began to come up over the land, first with a scud of rain—a bad sign.

“When the rain comes before the wind,
Topsail halyards you must mind,”

as we all know ; then a heavy thundery-looking cloud formed and drifted rapidly away low down over the sea, and the wind shifted a point or two and headed us more, so that the Skipper

had to run down the two head-sails, but we kept them ready to run up again at a moment's notice, as with a repetition of our tube disaster they would offer our only means of safety with the wind where it was, and would keep us off the rocky coast. I wished that we had a mizzen as well, and think it would be a very advisable addition to any small steamer.

Just as darkness was coming on the gale sprang upon us in earnest, great fast-flying clouds like giant eagles' wings hurrying up out of the S.W. with a shriek of wind that soon whipped the sea into angry breaking waves, and furious rain-storms that obscured everything, blotting out the lights of Cherbourg Harbour that had by then become visible, and making it very difficult for me to steer. We were then almost stationary in the strong tide-race off Cap Levi. The Skipper remained in the engine-room piling on coal and doing everything to keep the boat going in the fight with the sluicing tide, and I had to keep her on her course as best I could, for the figures of our compass are rather small, and the light from the binnacle lamp not very good, so I required the aid of my reading glasses, which were quite useless in

the rain and flying spray, and when the breakwater light was invisible I could only estimate the proper course by the Cap Levi Lighthouse. After we had struggled past it, we noticed how the flood-tide had set us in towards it—a way it has got here. MacMullen in his *Cruise in the Orion* mentions the same thing, and says he found himself quite as near to those dangerous rocks as he cared to be after a somewhat similar struggle with the tide-race. Victory came to us at last, though, and we passed in through the eastern entrance to the calm waters inside the breakwater. To avoid a collision with one of the large iron buoys I stood forward peering for them in the darkness, and signalling with my arms to the Skipper as I sighted them. It was not till 10.30 that we got to anchor, tired, drenched and hungry; but oh, how glad we were to be in, out of that wild tumult, and how splendid the hot mock turtle soup tasted after a fast since afternoon tea!

A good sleep for one (like myself) easily disturbed is more difficult to get in Cherbourg Harbour than a good meal, even when one is dead tired. I counted nine disturbances in six hours, and it was little

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better in all the other ports. Here they are :—

To bed at 12.

12.30. Mail-boat leaves with merciless whistling.

1 A.M. Pilot-boat brings up close to us with much shouting and noise of chain.

1.30. Our own chain bangs over the stem (the worst of all boat noises).

2.15. Skipper gets up to see if we are keeping clear of the pilot-boat.

2.45. That wretched chain again.

4.15. Big gun fires on fort enough to wake the dead. (A daily nuisance, goodness knows what for; something to do with the signal station, I believe.)

5. Loud church bell from the land to windward.

6. Réveillé bugles, followed by a band, from the barracks near us.

6.30. Skipper arises and begins to wash down.

These are just the extra noises, but a small boat in a gale of wind is not silent. The wind whistles and hums in the mast, the halyards keep up a constant tapping, and one often has to get up and secure a lashin or canvas

cover that has become loosened and is whipping the deck or well covering frantically. The bother of the dinghy when wind is against tide bumping under the counter, which is such a bugbear to sleep in most small boats, is absent in ours, as we have light davits for her.

The next morning, as the weather seemed likely to continue rough, we made for the inner harbour, and had intended going into the dock, but arrived just too late, as the gates only remain open for half-an-hour before and half-an-hour after high water—an unusually short time. So we accepted the cordial invitation of the owner of *La Mouette*, a small motor yacht of about our size, to make fast to him, and there we remained all the time, being very comfortably placed and ready to go when we wanted to do so, without having to wait for the short period of open lock-gates. Incidentally we saved six francs, too, which is the charge for using the dock !

We were storm-bound in Cherbourg for four days—weather not very bad all the time, but too rough and unsettled for a little boat to venture on a long passage. Our position was close to the bridge, and handy for shops, cafés, and the theatre, with plenty to look

at in the harbour and along the quays, and we filled up our bunkers with the best steam coal we ever had there, by-the-bye. The town itself, apart from the shipping interests, is not very amusing, but we made two excursions in the near neighbourhood which I may mention for the benefit of the many yachtsmen who put into this finest harbour on the French coast and are often delayed there as we were. The steam tram running out of the town on the west side lands one two kilometres from the interesting old village of Querqueville, with its church sitting on a steep hill, just above it. In the churchyard, side by side with the church of to-day, is a tiny chapel dating from the fifth century, and therefore one of the oldest places of Christian worship in the world. It is enrolled as one of the chief historic monuments of France, and its size was presumably adequate for the scanty population of that far-away age. From the hill a bird's-eye view of the harbour is obtained, every entrance and mark showing like a map.

On another afternoon we took the tram in the opposite direction, and from its terminus walked through pretty fertile country to the chateau of Tournaville, which though built

600 years ago is still inhabited and well kept up. The road runs close to it, and overlooks the castle and moat. This was the home, in the days of Louis XIV., of a Count de Tournaville whose abominable conduct to those in less fortunate circumstances was typical of many of his class at that time, and undoubtedly was laying the foundation stones of those events which later brought such awful retribution on the aristocracy. The deeds of this villain were, however, too much for even the poor people of that day to stand meekly. His culminating act was to playfully pick off with his gun a labourer who had just finished some work on the roof, dropping him "like a pigeon," as my informant said! After this "Le Grand Monarque," who liked to get others to do his work for him, offered a reward of 10,000 francs to any one who would bring him to justice "dead or alive." This reward was won by his valet, who cut his throat from ear to ear while shaving him, and rid the country of a tyrant. The family has died out now completely.

We came in for the Regatta, which was favoured with a bright sunny afternoon. A race of eighteen Berthon dinghys from the battleships

with obstacles to cross was an amusing novelty. Monday morning dawned fine, clear, and still, but the very low glass showed it would not last. Still the time was running on, and we were anxious if possible to be back for Cowes week, which was just beginning, so we decided to depart, rose with the lark, and were off steaming down the harbour at six, having breakfasted and made all snug. The English steamer, from Southampton, was just arriving as we left. It was evident from the first that we were racing a gale, for the glass fell lower still during the morning, being below 29° by noon. The clouds began mustering in battle array down in the S.W., the wind veered about from S.E. to S.W. and back again, and the waves became steeper and larger every hour. Still, the whole of that morning the run was ideally pleasant and fresh, the coast behind us so clear that houses and trees were visible when we were far out at sea. Never having crossed with such an extraordinary clear atmosphere before, I thought it a good time to test the distance land could be seen, as I have heard it asserted that both countries could be seen from mid-Channel on this crossing together. When the last bit of the topmost

land above Cherbourg melted into the sea from me as I stood on deck we hauled in the log, and found the distance to be $34\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the breakwater. About half-an-hour afterwards, as I stood in the bows, the first grey top of the English Downs (above Swanage) were sighted, the Wight not appearing till later. This, it must be noted, was in those phenomenally clear conditions which come often before rain; generally one is for hours out of sight of land.

The weather was getting very dirty indeed, before we reached our destination; and it looked as bad to windward as it possibly could look. The race with the gale was getting in truth a close one when we rounded "Old Harry" into sheltered water, and brought up in the South Deep under Branksea Island (in the same spot from which we had taken our departure), at 5 P.M.—not a minute too soon, for an hour afterwards torrents of rain were obscuring everything, till the howling gale swept even the rain away, shrieking through the rigging all night, and blowing dashes of spray over our deck even in the shelter of Poole Harbour! The whole of the next day the storm continued to such an extent that landing

was impossible in the dinghy, and we did not cease to congratulate ourselves on having slipped over just in time. It was much the same experience as our crossing from Fécamp in the *Beaver*, a similar tempest having broken a few hours after our arrival on that occasion also, but then the glass had not given such very clear warning as to what card it had up its sleeve for us as in this instance, when we knew all the time that we were—*racing a gale*.



BUCKLER'S HARD, BEAULIEU RIVER

CHAPTER XII

A CRUISE IN MID-WINTER TO BELGIUM

It was late in December when a burly friend of ours—a yachting enthusiast, who fears neither summer heat nor winter cold so long as he has a deck to walk on—came to us with the suggestion that he should fit out his 20-ton schooner-yacht for a cruise to Holland, after skating and wild-duck shooting, and that we should accompany him. “Anything for a new experience,” we said. So a fortnight later found us arriving at Wyvenhoe station, where we were greeted with a stentorian hail from our friend and host, who informed us that the *Fox* was lying out in the river, and ready to start that very afternoon, so the sooner we got ourselves and our kit-bags on board the better. We and our luggage, by-the-bye, had caused considerable wonderment to our fellow-passengers on our journey from the south coast. They were evidently puzzled as to what we were up to, and whether we were foreigners,

or what else might be the matter with us. When one's wardrobe has to be strictly compressed, and one is going to knock about the North Sea in January in a comparatively small boat, one must think solely of comfort and warmth and not of appearance. We were therefore arrayed in skin coats and skin gloves and yachting caps, with the strongest and thickest of boots, and leather leggings, and had with us oilskins and sou'-westers, skates and guns, &c., and all our luggage was in seamen's waterproof kit-bags.

We should have liked a little longer time to investigate Wyvenhoe, as it is a favourite place for laying up vessels, and a great headquarters for yacht hands, whose reputation stands so high that I know many owners who will have none but Wyvenhoe men on their yachts. However, as our time for the cruise was limited, our skipper wished to take the ebb down the Colne to be ready for a fair start in the morning, and this we accordingly did, bringing up for the night a little below Brightlingsea. But a little further down the river was pointed out to me next day the favourite anchorage for yachts—the Mersea quarters under the lee of Mersea Island.

Considering the size of our vessel she was wonderfully comfortable. Besides the fo'castle, where dwelt the skipper and boy, who formed our crew, there was a good main cabin—our saloon by day, and at night the abode of our host, who resigned to us the after-cabin with its two berths and nice little stove, which, however, we could not use when under way, as we found its chimney affected our compass. We were all the following day working down to Margate, passing the long line of buoys and lightships and beacons which mark those intricate sands at the mouth of the Thames. The navigation across the river is somewhat difficult, as all the buoys mark channels in and out of the river and not across it, so it is generally found easier to work up to the Mouse and then take the down-going line of buoys out again. In the Bullock Channel the dredgers and barges usually shoot the cargoes of London refuse, and a tale is told of a steamer which took the ground there and found something very wrong with her when she got off, so docked for an inspection, when twenty-nine iron bedsteads were found entangled in her propeller! So avoid the Bullock Channel unless you are collecting for a scrap-

iron heap! When darkness came upon us we brought up off Margate—rather an open anchorage for the time of year, but the weather was fine though very hazy, and the sea calm. Long before the late winter's dawn came on the second day, the *Fox's* anchor was up, and she was sailing for the French coast. A glorious run it turned out too; the sun shone brightly on the waters, and, with one big topsail set and a nice little westerly breeze, we slipped along well, passed the Ruytingen Buoy (the first in French waters) at 3.20, and with the last streak of daylight brought up in Dunkerque Harbour.

The weather was lovely again next day, which we spent in shopping and airing our French, an order being given for an early start in the morning, but a change had come in the night with a shift of wind W.S.W., banks of nasty ragged-looking clouds coming up, and the glass falling. We put a couple of reefs therefore in the mainsail, and, as she had what schooners like best, a wind on the quarter, she made a fast sail to Ostend, only giving us anxiety as to the whereabouts of the nasty Trapageer Sand, the buoys which mark it being obscured in a blinding snow-storm which came up, just as we knew we

should be close to it. The thick freezing and impenetrable squall only lasted a short time, but long enough for us to discover where the edge of the *Trapageer* was by a very clear method—a hard bump with our keel, followed by several others as she rose and fell in the breakers! Two fishing-boats came up to our assistance, a kedge was run out, and with the aid of the wind, which was from the east, after a short time we got her off before serious damage had been done, but that bumping on a hard sand with the open sea breaking all round you is anything but a pleasure, and I welcomed with considerable effusion the sheltering arms of Ostend Harbour, as the weather did not look inviting for a night out. We had to warp all the way up the harbour, and after all had to lie for the night in the outer one, and could not go into the shelter of the inner dock till next morning.

Down went the glass, and down dropped the thermometer, and down too, alas! went our hopes and prospects of getting to Holland for the duck shooting; in fact, such a spell of wild winter weather came on as caused us to thank our stars that we were in a safe harbour. For days the gale blew from the N.E. with

snow and sleet and the *Fox* fast frozen in the ice, whereon accumulated daily the cabbages and refuse of the town, which at other times finds its final resting-place beneath the waters of the dock. Every day did we battle our way out to the end of the pier to see the poor fishermen in their short luggers tearing back from the North Sea fishing-grounds for safety, many of them with their sails rent and torn and bulwarks and spars damaged, and lucky those who got back at all. Forty fishermen, we were told, from Ostend alone never returned to port from that freezing gale !

We passed our time pleasantly ; the *Fox* was comfortable, and we found a friend spending the winter in his small yacht in the dock who introduced us to many residents, and stood us a great dinner at the Ostend Club, which amused me greatly, as ladies are not generally admitted to such functions, but under the circumstances my presence was insisted on. Such a wonderful dinner ! It began at 6.30 and went steadily on till 10.30. In fact such an endless succession of courses were there (cooked, too, as only a Frenchman *can* cook them) that I wonder there was anything left for outsiders in the provision shops next day !

On one occasion we trained over to Bruges through the snow-clad country, and spent a very interesting day in exploring this strange old town, once one of the chief cities of Europe ; sledges were skimming about over the snow, and the many canals which intersect the town were frozen hard. The fine old tower, 350 ft. high, must look very pretty from the distant fields on a misty summer's evening with its beautiful carillon ringing out through the warm air. It has forty-eight bells in it, and we wondered if they were all in working order, but could not ascertain.

Bad weather does not go on for ever, even in January, and so at last the glass began to recover and the wind to abate, and with a change of wind to south the ice broke up, and the *Fox* emerged from her position and made a start for home, too much time having unfortunately slipped away to enable us to carry out our Dutch plans. With the wind off the land, and with a long swell left after the gale, we retraced our way to Dunkerque, but by the time we arrived there, a thick fog had come on, and we had to bring up in the open roadstead, where for four days we rolled most uncomfortably, the fog as thick as pea soup most

of the time, rendering our bowsprit end often quite invisible, and at no time lifting sufficiently to permit us to get under way and make for the harbour. It froze on the rigging till the *Fox* looked like the pictures of her namesake in the Arctic Expedition, the thermometer showed 18 degrees of frost, and the salt water even froze as it fell on the deck. One memorable expedition was undertaken in the dinghy by myself, husband, and "the boy" to get provisions, which were running short. We rowed to land all right, but in returning with our cargo the darkness overtook us, and with it the fog came on as thick as a wall, so much so that as we passed right under the Dunkerque Light—one of the most powerful on the coast of France, visible for 25 miles distance in ordinary weather—we could only see it for a moment, and then it looked like a faint round moon high up in the clouds. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that, in spite of a compass which we had with us, we had great difficulty in finding the *Fox*. Our friend on board was much alarmed for our safety, and kept ringing the ship's bell and firing his revolver to direct us; and so after some time had elapsed, and the small boat was getting uncommonly cold

quarters, we ran almost into the yacht. A fog is so bewildering that one seems to be going round and round in a circle; and even when close to the yacht, the noises they were making sounded first in front of us and then behind us!

A winter's cruise would not be absolutely complete without storm, fog, and collision—*all* three. So as we like to do things thoroughly, and had had the two first, on the second night of our rolling off Dunkerque, we pulled off the third, or rather it was obligingly done for us by the captain of the Dunkerque dredger, who did not consider that the dense fog was any reason why he should stop working, and argued that if any yacht happened to be lying there she had no business to be in his way, and must take the consequences. They heralded themselves in this instance by a tremendous crash in the small hours of the morning, with a hasty rush for the deck in scanty raiment on our part, with the idea that the yacht must be going down, and a volley of strong language from our Skipper (with chorus) after the retreating delinquent. On examination the damage done was found to be slighter than we feared it must be. The ironwork of the fore-channels

and the cathead had taken the shock, and the latter was broken and wrenched out of the timber head, but nothing else of consequence was seriously hurt.

The fog vanished at last, and the stars reappeared, so at 4 A.M. the *Fox* weighed anchor, and had another glorious sail over to England, with the sun shining as if it were May. We reached Ramsgate early in the afternoon, and the next morning we had to take leave of her and her kind owner, and make tracks for our home. The cruise had been a pleasant and novel experience in spite of our misadventures, and we consoled ourselves for our disappointment in not reaching Holland with the reflection that in a winter's cruise it is part of the play never to go where you wish, or to do what you have planned! The elements *must* have their voice in the matter.



M.S.

A good sailing breeze

CHAPTER XIII

THE MANACLE ROCKS—AND THEIR HARVESTS

[This is not, strictly speaking, a yachting chapter, yet it may interest those who have been fortunate enough to cruise along the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, an experience I regret to say,

“Yet hanging in the stars.”

for us. My glimpse at the boating and fishing in that charming anchorage the Helford river and westward to the Lizard was merely as a land visitor, and I give it as such.]

THERE was a nip in the east wind, and the breakers churned into creamy foam as they broke over the jagged rocks of the Manacles, and swirled away in eddies and angry ripples where the treacherous peaks lay beneath the surface like an ambushed foe waiting for prey. The little dark-sailed smacks were reefing as the breeze freshened and running back to the shelter of their coves, for an easterly blow is not to be trifled with on that side of the Lizard, and the stalwart young Cornish fisherman, who learnt the position of every sunken rock with his A B C,

shook his head at the mention of dropping our fishing-lines that day, and said port was the best place for boats till a shift of wind. Yet far down in those depths, when the weather is fair, lie the rich harvest-grounds of the toilers of the sea—the harvest that is reaped by the fishermen or the waves as the crop may be—the harvest that no man sows. So the bronzed Cornishman sat on the cliffs, and as he puffed at his pipe and mended his nets discoursed to me of the incidents of toil and danger and simple excitements which fill the lives of these hardy people and encompass their horizons from start to finish as their seine-nets do the fish.

First and foremost of all the great events of the year is the pilchard-catching, and the mackerel is like unto it, or of scarcely less importance. Small local syndicates, having at the largest, one hundred members of £3 per share, stand the expenses of this annual marine venture, and when the catch is landed and disposed of take half the profits, the fishermen taking the other half; but sometimes a party of boatmen club together and do a little launch-out “on their own,” buying some boats and a seine-net and taking the

whole risk and profits themselves. One of the chief expenses is the wages (£1 per week) of the watcher, called the "heuer," who stands on a certain lofty cliff all day long from August 1st till December watching for a shoal. This he sees from the colour of the water, which becomes as red as blood, though why I do not know, as the fish are silver! When he sees this he yells out "Heva!" and hoists a flag on a pole. Instantly the whole country-side is in a tumult; men and women yell the call to battle at the top of their voices, throw down any other work they have in hand, and run to the beach as if they were firemen called to a fire. Here the boats are always in readiness, winches, oars and seine-nets all to hand, as there is no time to lose, and very soon the four that work together are pulling off as if for their lives, their course directed by signs from the "heuer" on the cliff. One boat anchors near shore, and from her winch connects by a rope called the treath with the other boats and the seine-net, which is gradually spread out in a wide horseshoe; and as this fills with fish it is narrowed at the ends till the fish are completely enclosed in a ring. Then it is drawn close to shore,

and the "heuer," who is always an adept at the business, estimates the weight and value of the catch. This he does mainly by the colour. The redder the mass of fish appears the heavier are they packed. A record price, I believe, was 23s. per 1000, but they have been sold down to 7s. 6d. per 1000, or 22s. 6d. per hogshead (3000). News having been telegraphed to the dealers in Penzance, Falmouth, and other places, vessels arrive post-haste from there to purchase. They anchor as near shore as possible, and the fish are transferred into their holds by a smaller net which draws them out of the big seine-net. These latter are, of course, very strong, their dimensions being about 150 fathoms long and 12 fathoms deep. The great solid seine boats are built for about £50 each and rowed by eight men, their dimensions being 30 feet by 15 feet or a little less. The pilchards are cured and packed in barrels in all the small local towns, and go in large quantities to Italy, where they form a staple article of food.

But it is the line-fishing which, lasting as it does all the year round, is the mainstay for the fishermen and the great producer of their daily bread, and it is in this that visitors

spending pleasant and healthy holidays in the Cornish villages delight to join. A 200-fathom line is used, with hooks at every fathom baited with slices of pilchard, or any other dainty that appeals to piscatorial tastes. This is laid well inshore during spring tides, further out at neaps, and is left down for an hour, during which time of waiting fish are caught with a small hand-line and artificial bait. Then when the line comes up it may have a large variety upon it. Pollack, ling, cod, skate, bream, and conger all go to the markets from here. The conger sell for 10s. per cwt., and may weigh from 3 lbs. to 70 lbs. A fisherman recently had 7 cwts. in one haul on two "boulders" (200 hooks). The shell-fish are magnificent here, too. A favourite spot for lobsters is by the Manacle bell-buoy. My informant has taken them there up to 13 lbs., and crabs heavier still. The lobsters are caught in pots, but the crabs in special nets made with heavy 9-lb. twine and a very large mesh.

And what of the other harvest—that reaped on those cruel rocks by the pitiless waves? The answer comes from the village churchyards, where the graves of the drowned lie thick—aye, and from the cliffs and fields,

where the very stiles are made of the timbers and beams of wrecked ships. Since the bell-buoy was placed there nine years ago the casualties have greatly diminished, but up to then three or four wrecks a year have been frequently known to take place. In St. Keverne's fine Norman church, high up above the sea, the old caretaker has a look in her face of never-to-be-forgotten horror when she tells of the awful sight there in 1898, when fifty-two of the 106 who perished in the *Mohegan* were laid out on the stone floor of the church and identified by broken-hearted relatives who hastened there from all parts on hearing of the wreck. The Ionic cross, which shows where forty-two of them lie in one grave, has simply and significantly the one word *Mohegan* on it in large raised granite letters, as if the tragedy connected with that name told its own tale. Near by is a large plot covering all that remains of 120 soldiers, whose vessel was wrecked on the shores of their homeland when returning from the wars; and close to that large grave is another, where eighteen men of the 7th Hussars are buried, who were drowned on returning from the Peninsular War.

But (thank God !) not all the vessels that during recent years have gone to their doom on the jagged pinnacles of “The Voices,” “The Fin,” and others of the ledge have carried human lives to destruction with them ; the gallant efforts of the lifeboatmen have snatched them from the jaws of death even among the seething waves and sunken perils of that terrible spot.

This was the case in the wreck of a fine three-masted sailing-ship laden with grain from South America, which in three days was broken completely to pieces, her destruction being hastened by her grain cargo, which, when it got wet, swelled and burst open both the sides of the vessel and her decks. The fatal attraction of these rocks for vessels is a mystery which has never been satisfactorily explained. Steamers like the *Paris* and the *Mohegan* are right off their course when they touch them, and their officers never seem to be able to account for the error—at least, those who survive to be questioned ! Whether there is a strong inset of the tide on a spring flood, or whether some attraction on the land affects the compass, has never yet been decided ; but it is quite certain that in the Helford river

the latter is the case. My fisherman friend told me that on a tug there once he noticed the compass was pointing south-west when their course was west. "Yes," said the master of the tug, "that is always the case here; the mercury in the cliffs affects the compass."

From the bungalow above Porthkerris Cove where I was staying, out there in the darkness of the night and the surging of the waters I could hear fitfully and intermittently the deep-toned note of the bell-buoy tolling, it seemed to me, the knell of the souls that have perished among the cruel rocks, and I thought not of the happy harvesting of the fishers singing and laughing as they hauled in their lines on a sparkling summer sea, but of the black nights and the thundering seas, and the grim Reaper busy with his scythe when the souls of men and of women and children are the grain.

The harvest which no man sows.

* * * * *

But this is getting to the tragic side of sea life, and with that *we* have nothing to do. Our's is a time on it of holiday laughter to the ripple of dancing waves. We are—

"Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders
This many summers in a sea of glory,"

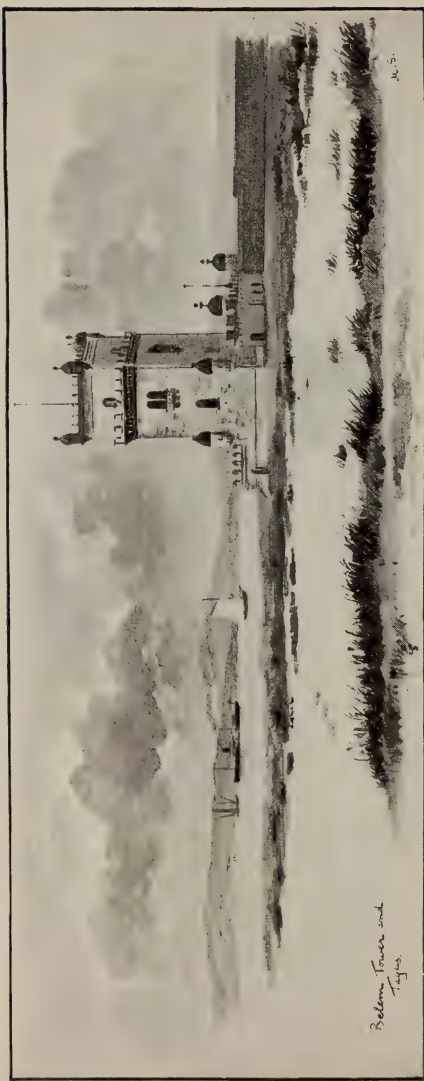
and if we do occasionally get a glimpse of the angry menace that lies behind the smiling mask, and the awful power of the sea-god with whom we are at play—why even then we are hardly disposed to take it seriously, but look on it rather in the light of a somewhat grim joke. Perhaps something of the fascination the sea has for us, though, lies in the fact of its awful power, and the mystic character of its deep notes of tragedy and pathos, appealing to our complex natures in a way that nothing *can* that is wholly mirthful. And when we are kept awake in the winter's nights even in our snug, warm beds by the howling of the tempests round our houses and through the swaying trees, surely we of the yachting world, more than all others, must think anxiously of "those in peril on the seas"—those whose life lies, in gales as in sunshine, on the great waters—those whose stern master is to us only a laughing and beloved playmate.



ETNA FROM TAORMINA.

PART II

CRUISES IN BIG STEAMERS



Belem Tower and
Tijues

CHAPTER I

ON LINER VOYAGES IN GENERAL

WE now leave the cruising in small yachts which has formed the subject-matter of the first part of my book and go on to the more luxurious side of life on the high seas. It appeals to a very large portion of the holiday-taking public nowadays, as the directors and owners of large liners spare no pains in making a pleasure voyage attractive and agreeable. In fact I think there is only one problem left for them to solve, and that is the feasibility of giving each passenger a cabin, however small, entirely to himself. It is the discomfort of a small space shared with another person—probably a total stranger, and probably also an invalid for part of the time!—and the fatal lack of privacy, that still keeps the ranks of those who prefer a sea voyage to a land trip so thinned down.

A run on one of the smaller passenger steamers has some advantages for a real sea-

lover over the big "floating hotels," for on them you can often secure a cabin to yourself, and there is not quite so much playing of games and perpetual racket on deck, which the general public seem to like, but which is rather irritating to those who appreciate the silence and majesty of the great ocean, and wish the cricket and quoit-players were amusing themselves in some suburban field. Still, those who feel like that, I must hasten to add, form a very small minority, and in a big ship they can easily escape from the noisy throng by going right forward over the very stem of the stately ship, where they will probably be left entirely in peace, and can sit with glasses handy and a book all the afternoon, forgetting the motley crowd behind them entirely. Even the noise of the engines is hardly heard up there, the vibration is not felt, and the motion is more like that of a sailing ship. At night, too, there is a singular charm in leaning over the bow of a large vessel as she cuts through the dark waters, the white wave leaping up to meet her as she charges ahead, no horizon visible and the star-spangled sky melting into the dark ocean. The absence of sea-line all around one gives a sensation of gliding

through an infinite firmament that is quite different from the steaming in daylight. Then on rougher nights it certainly is pleasant to have a change in the gaiety of the saloon and main-deck. I shall never forget dancing on the deck of one of the P. & O. boats as we glided slowly and steadily through the Suez Canal, with the sandy shores of two continents shimmering mysteriously on either side of us in the moonlight. Dancing in rough weather, too, has a charm it never has in any ball-room. The rolling boards under-foot, and the gusts of wind rushing through the canvas screens, add to the true spirit of movement, while the grim earnest note of the howling wind in the rigging and the swish of the breakers mixing with the music have a singular and strangely fascinating effect.

Life, it has been truly said, is much what we make it ourselves, and the same thing applies in a large measure to the experience of a sea voyage on a large ship. You may come back with little gained beyond some rubbishy prize won in a hat-trimming competition or a tug of war, and the recollection of sea-sickness and the misunderstandings with friends you have injudiciously taken to heart after a few days'

acquaintance on board ; or, forgetting all the small discomforts and annoyances incidental to travelling, you may bring back a storehouse of information and memories of wonderful scenes in far-away lands that will last for a lifetime. It is not the fault of the Directors of the line or the Captain of the ship if your eye has failed to catch the deeper blue of a southern sea, if you have been too busy with deck quoits to notice the Peak of Teneriffe rising like a white cloud from the horizon line, or if the grand proportions of the Acropolis were wasted on one who was more interested in the choosing of picture post-cards and curios ! I have known the experience of an evening start from Malta Harbour, with all the consummate skill it entails on those in charge of the ship, lost on 99 out of 100 passengers who would not miss a song or two at a concert in the saloon, and the steam from Rotterdam down the Maas, which was the pick of a ten days' cruise, sacrificed for the first few courses of a long dinner !

“ Only he who sees takes off his shoes,”

and the number of those is strangely small, but the burning bush is there all the same.

It may be said that in the ensuing chapters

more is written about the countries visited than about the actual cruising in the liners, and it is so, as the routine of life on board, to those who have nothing whatever to do with the navigation and working of the vessel, is much the same on each occasion, and those who know it can fill in the details for themselves. I have picked out from many voyages I have been fortunate enough to have taken in the course of years those which I think most attractive, as a suggestion to the many who have not leisure for very lengthy runs to distant shores, having perhaps only a few weeks at their disposal.

CHAPTER II

A LINER'S CRUISE IN NORTHERN WATERS

HAVING long had a great wish to see something of the northern waters and capitals of Europe, I took advantage of a cruise planned by the Donald Currie Co. for the *Dunvegan Castle* and secured a berth on her for the three weeks' run, for it was not the first time I had sailed under that well-known and justly famous flag, and I knew from past experience how very well they do one in every way—so well, indeed, in the gastronomic line that passengers sometimes suffer from the effects of too much high living and rich food, which is rendered still more inviting by the elegant way in which it is served, the beautiful table-linen and flowers, and the efficient waiting of the large staff of stewards.

It was, therefore, on the 29th of July that the *Pipefish* made her respectful bow to her gigantic friend, and forthwith delivered over to her 6000 tons of bulk the smaller vessel's



Lipari Isles

crew, accompanied by such limited baggage as could be squeezed into the little cabin for the run up from Yarmouth, I.W., to Southampton, and subsequently under the liner's berth for the voyage. And here I may add that the owner of the said baggage soon felt herself to be a sad moth amongst the butterflies, for anything more elaborate than the costumes displayed on this voyage I have never seen on the high seas, and it must have taken all the spare time of that most unfortunate and greatly harassed man the purser to give out from the baggage-room the cases of clothes and fresh costumes which were stored there, for certainly the few pegs provided in the cabins could not hold one-tenth of the dresses many of the ladies thought it necessary to bring with them !

Before our ship began to move in a very imposing and stately manner away from the wharf by which she was berthed, rain had begun to fall, and the band strove gallantly, with its liveliest strains, to dispel a distinctly dismal feeling that descended upon us all in consequence.

Irrespective of the weather, though, I think the starting off and ending up of a big ship's

voyage always gives one a fit of the blues, and I look out for it now as all in the day's work ! We spent the first afternoon, while passing through Spithead and along the Sussex coast, in unpacking our belongings, growling about the limited space in our cabins, and eyeing with suspicion and caution all our fellow-passengers on board, after the manner of our race, and especially those in our immediate vicinity at the table ! However, by the end of the second day we all began to thaw a little and to be more at home with each other, and the absolute calmness of the sea permitted every one to be on deck and to enjoy the bright sunshine and sparkling waters. At 6 P.M. we embarked our Hull contingent of about twenty passengers (making the total up to 208), and then took our departure across the North Sea on the longest run of the voyage—500 miles—to Bergen. Very calm weather was with us all the way, but a fog set in on the night of Sunday, the 31st, and the terrific bellowings of our stentorian fog-horn made night hideous and sleep to those unfortunates who were in the immediate vicinity of it impossible. It cleared off a little the next morning, when we were approaching the coast of Norway, but still lay

heavily over the land, which was so invisible that our captain, and also Captain Johnsen, our Norwegian officer, deemed it unadvisable to approach nearer till we had picked up our local pilot. We therefore waited a short time and cruised about till he sighted us and came on board. This, of course, gave rise to the usual sage assertions and suppositions, for we passengers always think ourselves so very 'cute, and with a little pressing are quite ready to offer the Captain some useful tips on his own trade! Having, therefore, just sufficient sense to see that we were off our usual course, it was confidently proclaimed that we were utterly lost, and had no idea where we were; in fact, some old ladies were quite alarmed, and hoped we shouldn't wander off into the Mælstrom, "which was somewhere in that direction," and get sucked down! One of the officers told me of another instance of the wonderful sharpness of passengers—a steamer proceeding slowly up Channel in a thick fog met one of the Antwerp pilot boats and communicated with her, whereupon the knowing ones, seeing Antwerp upon the mainsail, reported, on returning to land, that they had completely lost their way in the thick weather

and had found themselves off the coast of Belgium !

Beautiful, calm, land-locked waters usher one up to Bergen, and when we arrived off that picturesque old city we found a large number of vessels lying in the harbour, with numerous ships and torpedo-boats of the German fleet. The first dance was to be held on board that night, but we missed it, as we had planned to depart on a land trip for two days, and left to catch the four o'clock train soon after we anchored. No one else followed our example, as people generally shirk the bother of finding things out for themselves in a land where the language is as Greek to one, but personally I rather enjoy the fun and adventure of it.

However, the land expeditions on this cruise for the more easy-going were well arranged by those best of all managers, Messrs. T. Cook and Sons, and ably carried out by their representative on board, Mr. Hermann (whom I irreverently named "the ship's Cook").

When at each place the *Dunvegan Castle's* launch had deposited the parties on *terra firma*, those who wisely had taken the shore excursion tickets found themselves under his

capable pilotage, and on so fine a scale were the arrangements made, so magnificent were the barouches and horses he managed to secure, and so imposing the livery and cockades of the *cochers*, that, when at Christiania I wandered up alone to the King's palace, I thought his Majesty must be holding a levée, the courtyard being full of what I took to be the equipages of the élite, but what turned out to be, to my surprise, nothing more or less than our own *Dunvegan*-ites, with the ship's Cook! That unhappy man also served another useful purpose on board—he afforded a vent for the passengers' grumbles, at which we are very good hands, so when a slight alteration of the plans later on in the cruise necessitated the cancelling of the trip to Lübeck, there was such a marked inclination on the part of the disappointed ones to "go" for poor Cook that he wisely vanished altogether for some hours, and I had a shrewd suspicion that if we had invaded the sanctity of his cabin and searched in his bunk we should not have drawn a blank cover!

Our land run on that Monday afternoon—August 1st—was a lovely and varied one of 67 miles along a marvellously-engineered

line terminating (for the present only) at Vossevangen, where we spent the night in a fine hotel overlooking the lake. In the morning, during a stroll around the place, I was much struck by the great variety of berried plants and shrubs everywhere, many of them quite strange to me. Cook and a large party of our shipmates arrived by a special train for luncheon, after which we proceeded with them in the very uncomfortable native vehicles called *stol-kjaeres* (pronounced stole-cars), on a grand six hours' drive to Stalheim. I have never seen more game little cobs than these Norwegian animals. They are nearly all cream-coloured, and go with a will. Indeed, everywhere in Scandinavia the good condition and well-kept appearance of horses in the hired carriages is remarkable, and makes driving behind them anything but the penance it is in the countries of Southern Europe. The *stol-kjaeres* hold two passengers in front and the driver perched just behind them, his reins uncomfortably sawing their shoulders. The temptation to catch hold of them and stop the horse is too strong to be resisted when your coachman pretends he doesn't understand your orders for him to pull up. I did so on several occasions,

to the great indignation of our old man, whose one idea was to get over the ground as fast as possible. He nearly came to blows with me, and said some jaw-breaking things which sounded like swear-words!

At Stalheim, where we spent the second night out, we looked down on the lovely Naero Valley and that quaint and unique mountain the Jordalsnuten rising above it to the height of 3600 ft. The zigzag road down to the valley had to be descended on foot the next day, and then another three hours' bone-shaking brought us along the narrow road with its huge mountain walls and foaming river to Gudvangen, where we entered a little steamer and proceeded for two hours down the Naero Fiord into the Sogne Fiord, and found our floating hotel awaiting us, the band striking up "Home, Sweet Home," to our great amusement, as we came on board. The steamer was not anchored, for the simple reason that she could not find anything to lay hold of, for the astounding depth of these fiords is one of their most remarkable features, the lead-line finding no bottom sometimes at 600 fathoms. So, to my disappointment, we did not spend the night in that delightful spot, but steamed further down

to Balheim, and brought up there. All the next day we were threading our way down the Sogne Fiord and through the innumerable islets of the Inner Lead outside it, which I am confident is the Paradise to which the souls of all good boats go when they die, for nothing could be more perfect for a small yacht than these varied and sheltered waters.

To reach Christiania we traversed 60 miles of fiord in the early morning, anchoring just before breakfast. It seemed strange to think that where our ship was lying and baking in the hot summer sun, is solid ice all the winter, markets and fairs being held upon it! The tram takes one up to a beautiful pine-clad hill (Holmerkollen) above the town, where great ski-ing competitions take place every year when the land is bound fast in ice and snow. By far the most interesting thing to see in the city is the Viking ship, which was dug out of a mound in 1884, where eleven centuries ago it had been buried as the fitting coffin for the gallant chief who had sailed in it to far-distant lands; amongst the treasures interred with him, and preserved in more or less perfect condition, are the feathers of a peacock which doubtless he had

brought home from the East ! The ship herself is wonderfully sound and almost intact, with the rudder only on the starboard side. Goodness knows how they steered like that, but they *did* all right enough !

On the third day of our stay we departed at 6 P.M. and steamed down the tortuous waters of the long fiord till, with the night, we emerged again in the open sea, and thus said farewell to Norway, for the next morning found us anchored off a little Swedish yachting port called Marstrand, a convenient place to put into for vessels on the way to Norway, and we found several good-sized racers there, but the Swedish harbour dues are a caution, and make a call at one of these ports an expensive indulgence. We only remained a few hours off it, and then proceeded round to Gotenborg, which took us four hours, though our tug did it in half the time by going through a narrow fiord. The great object of our call at this quaint old town, built 200 years ago by the Dutch, was to allow us to visit the Trolhätten Falls—or, rather, Rapids—by a train journey of 50 miles. It is from Gotenborg that vessels start for the voyage to Stockholm, navigating rivers, canals, and three great lakes

—a very interesting exploration for a small steam yacht.

At Copenhagen we were able to go into port and make fast to the quay, which was a convenience, as we could come off and on to our ship without being dependent on the tug. By this time we were all getting to know each other very well—sports, games, and competitions of every description were in full swing, with dances or concerts nearly every evening. The tedium of life on the bridge for Captain Bremner also was not allowed to be quite unrelieved by the usual little varieties in the form of petitions from various passengers that he would go a bit faster, or call at other ports, or do divers things of that sort, and with much the same result as that which attended on the deputation of another vessel that was trying to break the record of her line on a voyage to New York. When the document asking for a reduction of speed during the heavy weather was handed to him, all the answer vouchsafed to him was: "Gentlemen, my orders are—Heaven, Hades (Anglicised), or New York in six days if possible. Good-morning."

For a description of the beauties of Copenhagen I must refer the reader to Baedeker, for

this is not a guide-book, but undoubtedly the works of Thorwaldsen, the great Danish sculptor, are the chief attraction of the city to all art-lovers, though I do not think anything he has there is quite as beautiful as his frieze in the Villa Carlotta on Lake Maggiore, every foot of which is a gem. It is in the visits to large towns that the advantage comes in of being merely a passenger in a steamer instead of a working hand on a small yacht, when time is so much taken up with one's duties. When I visited the great cities of Holland in the *Lerna* I had little opportunity of admiring the store-houses of magnificent pictures they contain, and had that been my only holiday there I should know nothing about them, but fortunately in days gone by one of my happiest tours had been devoted to those wonderful galleries.

From Copenhagen we went by train to Elsinore to see the splendid Castle of Kronborg, where Shakespeare makes the "Hamlet" tragedy to have taken place; but, as the Castle was building from 1574 to 1584, when the bard was living and writing, I feel sceptical, and suspect he just heard the building described by some enthusiastic traveller who had been

there, and thought it a good name and place on which to hang a romantic plot. Be that as it may, it is a very fine castle, and makes a good object for an expedition.

I admired the way in which our great ship was backed out of the dock with a tug ahead and astern, and then swung round in a space so nicely calculated that there was hardly room for a dinghy between her and the wharf at each end. Then her bows pointed northwards again, and up the breezy, blue Baltic we went for two nights and a day to Stockholm—that city which disputes with Amsterdam the title of the “Northern Venice,” and with more reason, for, though no other built by man’s hands can anywhere rival that peerless Queen, whose beauty defies even the strong sunshine that pours from her southern skies, yet when night throws its kindly veil over the more commonplace and uncompromising buildings of Stockholm, and all her thousands of lights are reflected in the waters, intensified by the blackness of the shadows, and broken by the dark span of the bridges, then she certainly looks a fairy city riding on a fairy sea. There are plenty of amusements, too, to make a stay here pleasant. Excellent bands discourse music in

the gardens, and excursions can be taken to many places, notably Salsjobaden, a lovely spot where islands and winding waters are combined with the more material, if unromantic, advantages of a very fine hotel and restaurant. The best way to visit this place is to go by train and return by steamer. But the pick of the attractions of Stockholm as a water Paradise was not seen by us till our departure, for, having arrived very early in the morning, we had not had an opportunity of seeing what is known as the Stockholm Skaargard (the Swedish version, I suppose, of fiord) till our return voyage, and then passengers clustered all over the fore-deck, spellbound with admiration, for every turn of the winding 40 miles of channel that connects the city with the open sea revealed new beauties of pine-clad island and promontory. The islets are so numerous on all this Swedish coast that the chart looks as if it had been peppered. I am told there are 7000 of them altogether; they are all rocky, mostly wooded, and but few inhabited. The greatest social event of the voyage took place on our steam down the Baltic, when on the night of August 16th the fancy ball was held, and most amusing it

proved to be, thanks to the ingenuity and contrivance of many of the masqueraders, who, not having brought fancy dresses with them, arrayed themselves in such material as they could collect. One handsome girl made a capital nun in her own waterproof and the ship's towels; another took a prize as an Oriental in a costume of orange drapery composed of the cabin door-curtains, with her own waistband and scarf for head-dress; while amongst the men, Chinese, Arab chiefs, and others defied recognition!

Then we entered our last foreign port of call—Kiel—and there spent two days, being much impressed with the size of the harbour, the beautiful woods that environ the town, and last, but not least, the fine fleet of warships lying in the bay, a sight that cannot fail to make a patriotic Englishman thoughtful, and a more willing payer of his heavy taxes ever after. It is a serious thing to be reckoned with if we are to keep our supremacy of the seas, and about *that* there must be no kind of doubt! And now our ship turned homewards, and after four more days at sea we realised that the voyage was drawing to a close. On Monday, the 22nd,

the *Dunvegan Castle* came slowly alongside the wharf at Southampton, where we had embarked, the good-byes were said, the special train for London received the larger portion of the three weeks' shipmates, and the cruise was over.

But in the long winter evenings, when the cold blasts howl round the house, in the glow of the ruddy firelight come back visions to the mind's eye of those northern scenes visited. Again the sunlight glints down the dark crags and steep precipices to the green waters of the deep fiords; again the white cataracts roar from the mountain sides to the foaming river of the Naero Valley, again the lovely islets of Salsjobaden float on their sunny tide, and with the memory of all those beauties comes the hope that some day an opportunity may occur for seeing more of that interesting land and its stalwart people, with their grand, genuine nature—bright as the unsetting sun of their long summer, keen and strong as those ice-bound months of the Norseman's winter.

CHAPTER III

TO MOROCCO—THE LAND OF THE FUTURE

GREASY, drizzling fog lying over the London docks and covering decks and bulwarks with smuts and dirt, and a raw, cold air, would have damped the spirits of Mark Tapley, yet it was under those discouraging conditions that we embarked one day in early March on the s.s. *Zweena*, a trading steamer of Forwood's Line, for Morocco, and I had to think hard of the fascinations of that land of mystery and romance that we were about to visit to prevent me heartily wishing myself back by my snug fireside! As we slowly warped out of the dock and swung into the river everything on deck looked dirty and uninviting. There was not a clean spot to sit down on even, but our big, hearty Captain was already ordering the steam hose-pipe to be brought into use, and advised the small knot of passengers to keep below while they got things clean. All that afternoon did the hoses play over everything, from the top



SAFI, MOROCCO

deck to the fo'castle, and as the rushing water swirled through the scuppers and hissed over bulwark and rail, soot and dirt vanished completely, and never reappeared for that voyage.

People had not at that time found out the Forwood Line for holiday runs. Now they make a round tour, I believe, of Morocco and the Canary Isles, but when we went they were chiefly occupied with the trading element, so remained a good deal longer at each port than they do now. Our few fellow-passengers were all residents in Morocco—English, Moors, and a Jew: a friend with me was the only other lady on board, and we had no stewardess. Still, it was only on the first morning that I was rather startled by seeing the sallow face of the head steward peering into my berth. “A fine morning, Mrs. Speed; will you take a cup of tea, or anythink?” After that introduction we soon found it quite in the day’s work to have him waiting upon us. I rather rejoiced, too, at the absence of ordinary tourists and the presence of residents in the towns we were to visit, for their conversation taught us more of the country and its manners and customs than any books we could read on the subject, and we had not got down Channel before I

had begun learning Arabic from an educated and obliging Moor. I wrote down about six fresh sentences and twenty new words every day, learnt them perfectly, and used them with him, so that when I left the ship on the homeward run at Tangier for a stay of some weeks in the country I could exchange greetings and remarks with the people during my daily expeditions for sketching and long rides to distant villages and Arab camps. This helped to make them, I think, the delightfully friendly and courteous people I always found them.

Biscay was in a sportive mood ; a rolling sea driven in by a fresh north-westerly breeze kept the ship lively, administering an occasional box on the ear lest she should get too saucy that shook her from stem to stern with a loud thud as if she had struck something, while she carried what the sailors call a white "bone in her mouth" all the way out to St. Vincent. From there summer reigned supreme, the waves calmed down into the smooth swell which is seldom if ever absent from that open, exposed coast, and the clear, brilliant skies both by night and day were a joy to look upon after the murkiness left in the north.

On the sixth day out, the Captain poked his

head into the saloon where I was reading. "Aren't you coming on the bridge to see us arrive?" he said. Up the ladder after him I flew at once, and there right ahead was the mystic land, the white houses of Sallee already visible, and getting plainer every minute. On we steamed till off the town (about half a mile out), and then as he got the great Hassan's Tower on a line with something or other and yelled "Let go!" we saw already making for the ship large boats and lighters rowed by such crews of picturesque men as I had never seen before, clad in coloured garments, cloaks and turbans, all standing to their oars and singing songs in weird minor tunes of rhythmic measure. Their handsome faces gleamed as they looked up at our deck, eagerly offering their wares—eggs, chickens, fish, fruits, and lovely bouquets of orange blossoms and roses with which we soon filled our cabins. In this anchorage the *Zweena* lay for two days, with a splendid view from the bridge before us of the two towns, one on either side of the Wad Bu Regrag river—white Sallee, still one of the most dangerously fanatical towns in the land, on the left, recalling to our minds those famous pirates of the Middle Ages the Sallee

Rovers, and opposite to it Rabat, protected by formidable walls and turrets constructed in the twelfth century by Spanish prisoners, and dominated by the great Hassan's Tower, 200 ft. high, which they also erected for their conquerors, the keys of Granada being built into the top of it. The town contains about 35,000 souls, of which the odd 5000 only are not destined for that paradise where Houris welcome the souls of the Faithful. Their mortal bodies lie on the green hillside between the city walls and the sea, the round graves of hard yellow clay looking just like sheep browsing on the grassy slope—which was what I took them for on approaching the port.

It was here that Mulai Hassan was *supposed* to have died, really he expired a day or two before arriving, but it was kept secret and he was carried into the town in his state palanquin—for it doesn't do to have any interregnum in a land where so many sons and brothers are casting their greedy eyes on that uneasy throne the history of which is indeed written in blood. Comparatively few of its occupants have died a natural death, and even those that surround it never know a moment's security. The mysterious mortality amongst

all the old Court officials, from the Grand Vizier downwards, within a year after this Sultan's death, is a proof of this being so. Our steam winches kept busy disgorging cargo into the lighters, and amongst the fresh provisions brought off to our ship were excellent fish called *shebbel*, looking and tasting like salmon, but with cream-coloured flesh instead of pink. They are caught in nets, the best place for them being about 15 miles up the river. A curious thing a man told me about this river is that, whereas there are any number of rabbits on the Sallee side, there are none on the opposite bank whatever. I got several sketches of both towns and a nice one of Sallee with the sun rising behind its menacing walls, but the Captain did not encourage shore-going, and said he never goes ashore there himself, and is always glad when passengers are safely back, owing to the awful bar between the ship and shore, over which such a formidable sea may get up in an hour that lighters have to leave cargo partly shipped and hurry back then and there, and no boat can come off over the bar in the teeth of it. In that case the only way in which the ship can be rejoined is to pursue her to Casablanca, the next port, 50

miles down the coast to the south. As there is not a road in the whole of Morocco, nor a wheeled vehicle to be found in the country (when I was there), this means a ride on horse or muleback with two rivers to ford in large ferries like those on the Nile, and a night to be spent under the traveller's own tent, or under the stars if he hasn't one with him, inside a walled enclosure called a Fondak.

The nights on the gently rolling ship off Rabat were lovely, the towns glistening under the bright moon, the air scented with the exquisite scent of orange blossoms from the orchards outside the town, and that mysterious silence which marks the contrast between these populous towns and our own. No trains, no church bells, no vehicular traffic whatever ! No noises therefore that will carry half a mile.

As there is only one lighthouse on the whole coast, and not another light at night to be seen down it at all except that on Hassan's Tower, it could not be recommended for a yachting cruise, and how our Captain managed to grope his way along in the darkness is a mystery. He only did it by keeping carefully to a certain compass point and counting the mileage on the log, then when dawn came and he picked

up his landmarks sometimes he found he had over-shot his port a little and had to turn back to it, and sometimes he was a bit short of it. At any rate, we got off about midnight, and after going dead slow all night brought up at sunrise off Casablanca (Moorish Dar-el-Beida, "the white place"), and well named it looked in the brightness of the morning sunshine, with its deep beach of yellow sand and pebbles running off on either side of the port. High walls doubly enclosing the city on every side were eloquent of the danger the citizens are always in from the wild and predatory tribes in the neighbourhood, and that accounts for the desolate appearance of the country outside those walls. Not a house of any sort was to be seen on the low rolling hills that stretched away to the distance, not a building save only the Saint House of Sidi Billiout, in a plantation of trees near the seashore, which was safe, though unguarded, in its mantle of sanctity, for a Mahometan is a Mahometan all the world over; what is sacred to one is so to the other, be he basha or fellah, priest or bandit; therefore around that shrine the white and brown robed figures pray in safety with faces turned towards Mecca.

A very little outlay would make Casablanca

into quite a decent port, as the trend of the land there gives it a natural protection from the S.W. and there is no "bar," that curse of most of the Moorish seaports. A dangerous sunken rock in the middle of the roadstead when I was there was a menace and peril to navigation, but an offer the Forwood Co. made to blow it up at their own expense had been refused by the Government on the grounds that, "as Allah had seen fit to place it there, to remove it would be impious!" The French have doubtless made short work of it by this time, and have probably made a proper mole. Nothing of the kind existed at any place when I was there, except at Tangier, therefore when the boats got into shallow water the travellers perforce made their entrance into the country through the surf on the backs of Moors, a mode of transit more amusing than dignified, to say nothing of the wetting you may get! My companion refused to venture, so I went ashore alone with an introduction to residents there, and the barbaric picturesqueness of everything in that town astonished and delighted me. The narrow streets without any footpaths seemed dangerously crowded—wild bullocks driven into the

market from the country, camels laden with vast loads, horsemen and pedestrians all jostled together pell-mell, shouting and colliding—quite an alarming experience to those unused to the Eastern world and its ways.

The city gates close at six, and I came down well before that hour to re-embark, but found that no boatman in the place would row me off for love or money, because they said they could not get back again before the closing, that nothing would then induce the watchman to let them back into the city, and they dared not spend the night outside for fear of the marauders who hover around the walls seeking what they can capture. It was *these* dreaded Moors, by-the-bye, who attacked the French, and not the poor citizens, but it gave an excuse for immediately bombarding and capturing the town. The poor little forts were blown to pieces with their ancient guns; 2500 melinite shells were poured into the Moorish quarter, killing and wounding those who failed to escape to the country, and razing most of the houses and mosques to the ground. Where was justice? But it gave the French a valuable foothold!

Well, a return to my ship being impossible,

I slept on a sofa in the English missionary's house, just under a mosque, and was awakened at dawn by that strange and wholly Eastern note—Allahu Akbar—the prayer-cry of the muezzin from the minaret. The dead silence that reigns in these towns till broken by this call is easily accounted for. At 9 P.M. the first warning gun fires, then there is a general stampede homewards from the cafés of figures carrying lanterns, for after the second gun at 9.30 every one found in the streets without a Governor's order is promptly clapped into prison for the night. All this I had watched during the evening from the house-top, and after I had subsequently seen the horrors of a Moorish prison I ceased to wonder that the threat of an incarceration in one effectually cleared the streets.

I stayed all the next day on shore also, and was taken by my friends to the house of a wealthy Moor, where I spent some hours, and was an object of great curiosity and interest to the ladies—gentle, dark-eyed women clad in graceful draperies of coloured silks and embroidered muslins, with golden tissue veils thrown off their faces in the privacy of the harem. There were no chairs in the



MOROCCO'S ONLY LIGHTHOUSE

room ; we sat on thick velvet cushions and partook of sweetmeats and tea—a horrid concoction made with half mint and half tea-leaves, with a handful of sugar thrown into the pot with it and no milk. Etiquette demands the drinking of six cups, but thank goodness they are very tiny ones. The cakes also tasted queer—flavoured with Argan oil and aniseed ! No women in Morocco are taught to read and write ; they do some embroidery, loll about, and play with their ornaments, pets, and children. The prettiest said she had been married ten years (since she was fourteen), had never been in the streets in her life except when she was carried to her husband's house in a closed palanquin, had never been even allowed on the house-top, and had never seen the sea though she could hear it ! What became of these poor creatures, I have often wondered, during the French bombardment ?

They were much distressed at seeing my nails unstained with henna, and assured me (through my friend) that such slovenliness would certainly end by alienating my husband's affections from me. One begged me so earnestly to allow her to paint them for me that I consented. The negro slave-woman

brought in a brazier in which she heated the stuff, and with careful and dainty hands she coloured every nail and finger-tip and bound my hands up in muslin to dry. She hoped, poor girl, she was helping to ward off from me that spectre that stands behind every Moorish woman, and as she painted my nails she did not notice the little gold ring on the third finger, or realise the safety and security that lies inside that magic circlet, nor would the equality and partnership of our marriage ideals be comprehended by her in the least. With them the first wrinkle may mean that the ruler of the harem to-day is the servant of to-morrow, then perhaps further degradation comes.

“And the last hour is shod with fire from hell”

is truly the case with the lower rungs of that terrible ladder at the bottom of which the old woman walks, yoked together with a donkey in the plough—a sight I witnessed more than once while staying in the country!

I went back to the *Zweena* in triumph to amuse them with my fingers. The Captain roared, and said I shouldn't lose it for months, and the steward agreed. I scoffed, and retired to my cabin with Scrubb's ammonia and soap, but after nearly flaying myself I had to come

out baffled, and ruefully exclaim, "All the water in the world will not wash this little hand!" Triumphant jeers! It was more than three months before I saw the last of it, but I was only too thankful that I had fended off an attempt she had made to touch up my chin and forehead, and really it was rather a bond of union afterwards with the Moorish women, who used to pat me on the back when they saw it, encouragingly—thinking I was trying to walk in the right way, I suppose.

From Casablanca we steamed on to Mazagan, landed, explored the dirty town, and walked all round its very substantial walls, built by the Portuguese when they took the port in 1506. A great Basha came on board our ship here, bound for a governorship near Mogador. He brought with him a large retinue of attendants; and his unfortunate wives, enveloped in black cloaks that completely covered their faces and left only their feet visible, were bundled up the ship's ladder like sacks, whimpering with fright, their children and pets—baskets of cats and cages of canaries—following them. The potentate was gorgeous in gold-embroidered robes with a white cloak and hood over all, while his feet were encased in baggy

white stockings and red slippers. He looked just like Mr. Rutland Barrington in one of his famous Oriental rôles as he stood pompously receiving with great hauteur and indifference the farewell salaams of many officials, some of whom stooped and kissed the hem of his garment. The Captain, though, rather upset the situation by calling out, "Here, steward, take this old pig downstairs and give him a good berth, for he's a big nob!" He exchanged a few greetings in the evening with me (I aired my new Arabic on him), and he presented me with a beautiful basket of sweets and fruit.

Then came Saffi, which is a pretty town from the water, but the landing is dangerous, the sea often getting up so quickly that the boats cannot bring passengers off again. It is a favourite place of disembarkation for those going to Marakesh (Morocco City), being the nearest port, only 104 miles from there. Near Saffi the best of the Barb horses are bred; they are grand riding animals, but I hate the Moorish bits, which fret their mouths and keep them constantly open, giving them a tapir-like appearance. The Moors indeed have no mercy on their horses' mouths, and think it a smart feat to stop a galloping horse, suddenly pulling him

on his haunches. Even the naturally gentle temper of a Barb gets frequently spoilt by the treatment he receives from merciless men in the breaking. Like all the Arab races, they are splendid horsemen, and indeed it is of no use for any one to go to Morocco who is not a good and fearless rider, accustomed to 'cross-country work, for one lives in the saddle, and all sorts of awkward places have to be negotiated. I was once called upon to give up an expedition when staying at Tangier or take a flying leap over a chasm five or six feet wide and thirty or forty feet deep. The fine black Spanish horse that was lent me for three weeks while I was there made light work of it, but it didn't do to dwell on the possibilities of his not doing so !

At Mogador, our furthest port, we stayed for three days that were full of interest and delight. The harbour is protected from the swell of the Atlantic by a long, rocky island, and is a place yachts sometimes come to from the Canaries ; but skippers would do well to keep a sharp eye on the glass, and to clear out in case of a rapid fall, for it is a bad place to be caught in, and sailors call it "the rat-trap." A little improvement on the natural

protection would make it a safe refuge in any weather. Tides rise 9 feet at springs and 6 feet at neaps, but the danger is caused by the shallowness of the harbour, which is all right so long as the sea keeps fairly calm, but heavy rollers thundering into it with the wind right in cause danger of bumping, and necessitate therefore a clear-out at once. Beautiful weather favoured us, though, and the few English residents were very kind, and told me the arrival of Forwood's ships was the event of the month for them, and the only way of keeping in touch with the homeland.

While I was at the Consul's a runner arrived from the interior. The only way in which letters can travel is by these native couriers. He had been trotting through the greater part of the kingdom; first from Tangier to Fez (160 miles, which he covered in four days), and then to Mogador *via* Mequinez and Marakesh. He was a wild, dark, bony-looking man, with feet like hard leather, and no baggage but his leather post-bag, a dagger, and a long stick.

There are still some living there who can remember the awful famine of 1875, when for eleven months not one drop of rain fell. Every green thing died, then the animals, and

then the people. Outside the gates of the city every morning numbers lay dead, wretches who had crawled there from a distance but had not the strength to live through the night. In the country places in the districts away from any river every one who could not get to the coast towns perished. A system of really deep wells and irrigation would prevent a repetition of this catastrophe, which is, however, fortunately of rare occurrence.

I should have much liked to have left the ship here and proceeded to Marakesh, but to go far from the coast towns is always rather an expensive undertaking; for when it is considered that there is not one road of any description in the country beyond a rough mule-track, it can easily be imagined that a considerable amount of paraphernalia in the way of tents, &c., must be carried; in addition to which it is absolutely necessary for the party to be accompanied by a small escort of the Sultan's soldiers to show it is under his protection, and this means baksheesh. When, however, Fez and Marakesh are given to the world, those who are quick enough to get there before they have been spoilt by railways and Western architecture will see

cities more picturesque and Oriental than Cairo and Damascus were fifty years ago. I have seen quite enough of the coast towns to be certain of that.

No place could be made more delightful for an all-the-year-round residence than this town of Mogador, and indeed all the coast of southern Morocco, for the warm African sun is here tempered by the cool Atlantic breezes which the west wind wafts obligingly all the summer ; never-failing rivers flow down through the country from the great range of mountains which forms its eastern wall and shuts it off from the hot sands of Sahara. It is dowered with a soil so rich and fertile that with no further cultivation than that afforded by the old wooden ploughshares, which have been in use for a thousand years, three crops a year can be garnered, and grape cuttings stuck roughly in the ground will in a few years yield good fruit without any care or attention being bestowed upon them. So profuse are the kindly fruits of the earth that in September the best black grapes cost only a halfpenny per pound, figs one penny per dozen. Indeed so cheap are they that after the market is over in Mogador, and the camels are

leaving, it is not thought worth while to reload them with the unsold produce, which is cast on to the gigantic rubbish heap in the centre of the Soko, and there devoured by pariah dogs and hungry beggars. Melons are almost wild, and field-flowers in springtime are often as high as a man's shoulder from the ground.

As to the mineral wealth of the land, the virgin soil still retains its secret, for no investigation into it has ever been permitted. Experts, however, say that signs point to untold riches in that direction ; and certain it is that the gold discovered in the Sus country to the south is of a peculiarly fine and pure nature. Indeed hitherto the beauty and richness of the land has been the salvation of its freedom ; for had it not been for the jealousy of more powerful nations, it would not have been left to a picturesque and despotic monarch, who can protect it only with an army of soldiers in flowing robes and red leather slippers—fearless fighters and brave, patriotic men, but armed with neither artillery nor any of the other deadly implements of modern warfare. It has been like a bone surrounded by hungry and ferocious dogs, each bent on keeping the other off it—the bone meanwhile remaining safe.

But I fancy now that its days are numbered. The French having by fair means or foul got their teeth firmly fastened into a good solid piece of it, are never likely to relinquish their hold again. They have meant business from the first, and though it is rash to prophesy I think that in half a century's time it will be another Algeria. Then that fair land will blossom like the rose, its lonely, desolate cliffs will be dotted with villas and seaside resorts, orchards and gardens will supply the markets of Europe, and the country will be intersected with roads and railways. But though the world will have gained another playground, where will be the mystery and picturesque charm of the "Arabian Nights" land of to-day? It will for the most part have vanished (as it has in Algeria), so that all those who love adventure and novelty, with a spice perhaps of danger thrown in, and who are not too particular about creature comforts, should hasten to Morocco while it remains as it is.

We replenished our larder on board, and feasted on the delicious fish like trout caught in the river Tensift, a change of diet we welcomed, for though we always had plenty

of live poultry in coops, they were dreadfully tough and tasteless owing to the non-hanging which is the rule on ships, a mistaken idea being prevalent that if a bird or beast is dressed directly it is killed it is all right; so the cries of the poor fowls, as the negro cook carried them from their coops on the upper deck, had hardly ceased harrowing my ears when we were called upon to eat their cooked corpses, to the detriment of our digestions—just two days' hanging would have made them delicious. The only other food item I could not get used to was the tea—invariably a horrible beverage on steamers—entirely owing, I think, to the unskilful mixing of the condensed milk, which should be well stirred into boiling water. When the steward of the *Pipefish* (*vide* Preface) mixes milk it can hardly be discerned as a detriment to the tea, unless the slight sweetness is objected to!

Retracing our way up the coast, we stopped again at each port, and also at Laraiche, the nearest to Tangier, where I disembarked and took another ship of the line home some time later from Gibraltar, being by then thoroughly charmed with Morocco, that mosaic jewel set in its crescent of sapphire sea, hidden, as

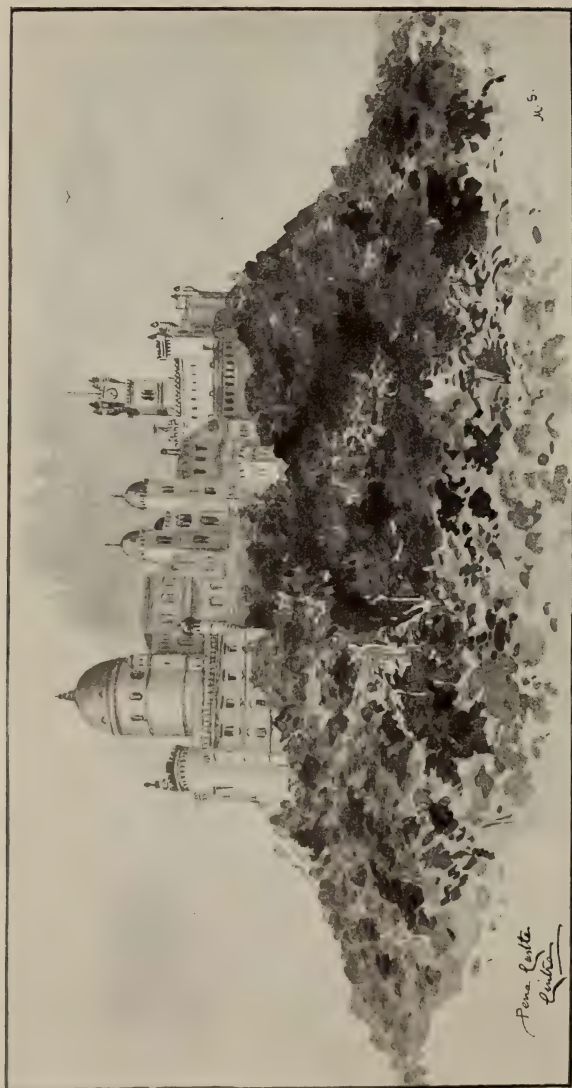
nature hides her loveliest gems in dark mines, from civilised eyes, and guarded by the menacing character and handy daggers of its fanatical tribes, even as their villages are protected from intruders by the sharp thorns of the aloe hedges which surround them.

There is a great export from Tangier of live bullocks for the market at Gibraltar, and when I finally left for that place in the little steamer that plies across the Straits I travelled with a herd of them, and was much shocked to see the unhappy brutes swung out of the lighters by a chain passed *under their horns!* This is the accepted mode of lifting them, but is forbidden on all British ships.

Beauty and barbarity, smiling nature, courteous handsome people, with merciless cruelty, grasping avarice, and fanatical hatred peeping out from under the roses and laughter—that is the medley of contrasts one is always meeting in this strange land. Yet even as it is, though

“The trail of the serpent is over them all,”

it takes hold of the imagination and the heart, delights one, and draws one back to it with an irresistible power that is possessed by no other country.



M. S.

Pena Palace
Lisbon

CHAPTER IV

A RUN TO LISBON

THERE comes a time to most of us in early spring when, tired of the outrageous length of our winters, we feel an ardent longing for a land where summer and sunshine have already set in. Those who, like myself, love the sea in all its moods would find a voyage to Portugal in the Hall steamers from London, or the Union Castle or Royal Mail boats from Southampton, a very enjoyable holiday. I chose the smaller line myself, and the severe experience I went through both in going and coming was no fault of their's, but was caused by the tremendous gales prevailing—the very worst I have ever encountered. It was partly my own fault for going in November instead of in the spring, with the hope of curtailing the winter at its commencement, for I was told out there that I had hit upon their worst month in the year for rain-storms and gales, and certainly nothing of the

kind was going on in those parts when I spent two days in Lisbon in April on a homeward voyage from Egypt.

My companion (a sister-in-law) and I found few other passengers on the cosy little ship when we sailed away from the London Docks and brought up to our surprise off Woolwich for a mysterious shipping of cargo. When going down the river I got out of the steward what we had been taking in—dynamite, gun-cotton, and fuses bound for Gibraltar! A nice thing to go to sea with! and I must confess we got an attack of rather jumpy nerves over it, and quite expected to find ourselves flying in fragments into mid-air for days afterwards. I suppose it is not often the cargo is composed of such dangerous material, still while recommending a voyage in this line I should suggest an inquiry before shipping on it as to what was going out in the hold, for the perils of the deep are enough for an ordinary traveller to face without the possibilities (though certainly not probabilities) that are connected with the presence of high explosives on board.

The glass fell lower and lower during the evening, the wind increased to a gale, and the

Captain shook his head and said he should see no passengers again for days. With one exception his prophecy was literally fulfilled. We were the other side of Finisterre before the table held more than a quartette, but the conversation of the Captain, first officer, and chief engineer, with their views of life, so different from those of an ordinary landsman, never allowed the solitary survivor to feel dull. The Captain, a hard old sea-dog, had little sympathy with sea-sickness, and said he thought a good "rope's ending" such as he received from his mate when he first went to sea would dispel it once and for ever! But I expect most people would prefer the evil to the remedy. He told me that two ladies came on board his ship one evening and retired to their berths in mortal dread of the miseries they were to go through. Some hours afterwards they rang for the steward and asked him if he could give them anything to alleviate their sufferings, as they were both very sick and ill. But imagine their astonishment when they heard that the ship had never moved from the docks! A thick fog had come on and prevented her starting, so the time had been utilised to ship some extra cargo, and the noise

of the winches they had mistaken for the engines. This instance he cited as proof positive that the malady is all nervousness.

Well, by the time we had sighted St. Catherine's Light on the evening following our start the seas in the Channel were so tremendous that the vessel seemed hardly able to drive against them (she was the oldest ship of their fleet, and the engines small and old-fashioned). Moving about could only be accomplished by staggering from one object to the other, sleep was out of the question as one had to hold on with both hands to avoid being pitched bodily out of the berth, everything that could possibly get adrift in the ship did so, and from the crashes going on I hardly expected to find a whole glass or plate left for use. In the morning I peered from the port-hole to see if I could recognise the land off Portland Bill or somewhere down there, when to my amazement I beheld in the distance right abreast of us the familiar chalk downs on either side of Freshwater Bay, I.W. We were not as far down Channel as the Needles, and had passed St. Catherine's the evening before! All night the ship had been fighting the heavy seas and but just holding her way against them while the

flood ran. The whole distance run in twelve hours could not have been more than eight miles, so the terrific force of the gale may be imagined.

When I cautiously shaped my course into the saloon for breakfast I found a queer sight, hose-pipes running along the floor from the companion, and pumping going on from a hold under the saloon floor, in which 9 ft. of water had been found in the morning. This hold was where the steward kept all his bottles and cases of wines, and the mysterious noises I had heard during the night were accounted for—knockings and bangings under the floor of my cabin which I had mentioned to the steward when he “called” me (or rather, came to see if I was still alive!). I told him I knew there was something wrong down below the floor. He was sceptical, but his investigation led to the discovery of the water, which had entered by a bolt-hole, the bolt having worked out in the straining and rolling. It was the cases of bottles which had been pitched violently against the sides of the hold that I had heard, as well as planks and shelves all washed adrift. Dozens of bottles of whisky and wine were smashed, and whole ones as well were floating

loose in all directions. Was it, I wonder, the *fumes* of the whisky mixed with the sea-water pumped out that got into the heads of the crew engaged in the pumping and salving operations?—at any rate half the men by night were in a very noisy and useless state, some of them having to be put in irons even, poor fellows! Finally the ship's carpenter managed to plug the hole, the water was pumped out, and the wind veering to the N.W. we were able to get along a little, but when the gale subsided, leaving a heavy sea running into the Bay of Biscay from the Atlantic, a dense fog came on its heels and gave us another kind of anxiety for all one night.

Fogs and storms alike vanished, though, when we at last entered the Tagus and made our way up its winding channel to Lisbon, where we arrived three days over-due, having been eight days coming there from London! From the water the city presents quite an Oriental appearance with its white houses and quays. Most of its buildings have come into existence during the last 150 years, as the great earthquake of 1755 overthrew in a moment almost the whole of the old town, burying at least 40,000 of its inhabitants beneath its ruins.

Phoenix-like, the present fine city has arisen from its ashes, but the story of that awful catastrophe, which until the destruction of Messina and Reggio in 1908 was without a parallel in history, must of necessity be the visitor's first thought on looking at the Lisbon of to-day. Here and there a reminder still speaks of the hour of terror. A bit of old quay may be seen, with the rings for hawsers, amongst modern streets, for the great tidal wave that followed the earthquake altered the shape of the harbour, so that deep water lies now over the site of streets and houses, and in other places quays are found high and dry. Or a cracked tower or roofless church (the Cathedral remains as it was then left, shattered beyond repair) stands like a mute and unheeded warning that the forces of nature are untamed and untamable, and that when they arise in their wrath man's boasted powers are impotent as a bauble plaything in the hands of a boy.

Only the west end of the town had the good fortune to escape from serious damage, and here the massive Belem Tower, built in 1500 to commemorate the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope and passage from thence to India by Vasco di Gama, stands—a solid and

conspicuous landmark. Also the Church of St. Geronimo with its beautiful carved pillars escaped injury, and the Royal Palace, where in a building near, a wonderful collection of old State coaches, some of them over 200 years old, adorned with exquisite brocades, velvets, and painted panels, can be seen, and unless they are now seized and scattered by the unanointed rulers of to-day will form an interesting relic of the vanished glories of departed majesty.

Our landing in the capital was at sunset, and when I had with some difficulty thinned down the fourteen men who seized upon our baggage to two, we proceeded to the Braganza Hotel for dinner, and then on a still, warm, moonlight night accomplished the one hour's train journey up to Cintra. The scent from the orange gardens and climbing heliotrope was delicious in the evening air as we slowly climbed upwards for 1000 ft. to where—

“Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of rock and fell.”

Not only Byron sang of this sweet spot, but Camoens, Southey, and many other poets made it their home for months at a time, and have

dwelt lovingly on its charms. The peace and quiet of it and of Mrs. Lawrence's comfortable but very unpretentious little hotel were much appreciated by us after our week of storms and tempests. From the town which clusters around the palace built six hundred years ago for the Moorish conquerors and their caliphs, winding paths lead up amongst cork-trees, planes, ferns, and luxuriant verdure to the steep edge of this splendid Sierra, where at an elevation of 1900 ft. the Pena Palace sits, enthroned. It was from there the royal owners fled on that night of sudden revolution still so fresh in our minds. Their regal home was built originally for a convent, and by that name it is still locally called : 100 miles of the world the nuns had forsworn was spread before their eyes from this mountain eyrie, the Atlantic sparkling on one side, the flat country stretching into the blue distance on the other.

The climate on this coast seems perfect : sea breezes temper the warmth of the sun, and the two together combine most favourably towards the growth of flowers and vegetation. Their gardens are the delight and pride of all old-established landowners in Southern Portugal, and an introduction should be procured to

some of them with a view to an inspection of their treasured flowers, a privilege they are always glad to grant. Visitors are most kindly allowed to roam over the grounds of Montser-rate, two miles from Cintra, and I think even the far-famed gardens on the shores of Lake Como must yield the palm to this paradise of beauty, wherein oranges, lemons, roses, camel-lias, and azaleas flourish, while wistaria and other lovely climbers riot over them all and tumble in cascades of colour from roofs and trellis work. In a ravine at the bottom of it all great Australian tree-ferns bend over a rushing stream and tell of frostless winters and balmy winds with no biting sting in them.

Then there is Mont Estoril, on the sea near Cascaes, now a very popular resort, only about forty minutes' run by train from Lisbon. The dark red cliffs with their famous caves, where the St. Rosa Lighthouse stands guarding the entrance to the Tagus, are near there. A bull-fight may sometimes be witnessed in the ring at Cascaes. Fights take place in Portugal shorn of their Spanish horrors, for no horses enter the arena, and the bull lives to fight another day. The carts out in the country fields and villages are extraordinary relics of antiquity,

having solid wooden wheels, made on exactly the same pattern as when introduced by the Romans. Bullocks draw them with their loads of hay, grapes, and other produce, but they are forbidden to enter the large towns on account of the squeaking made by the primitive axles. On the coast, too, the conservative fishermen build their boats with the high prows introduced 2000 years ago by the Phœnicians. The sardine fishing is an interesting thing to watch, especially when the long nets, which are spread out at sea in a semi-circle and left down all night, are drawn to shore by ten yoke of oxen at each end.

The account Byron gives of the Portuguese peasant in "Childe Harold" is rather surprising, as it seems strangely at variance with the peaceful, quiet, respectable fellow he is nowadays. Neither here nor amongst his brethren in Madeira does there seem the slightest occasion to fear him, and I think that in no country would a traveller be safer wandering about alone in the solitude of the woods and crags. All those I came across seemed wholly engrossed in their simple occupations, but looked up to give me a courteous greeting as I passed. The time spent in sketching

and exploring in this pleasant neighbourhood passed too quickly, in spite of rather unsettled weather with many heavy showers, but a telegram that a homeward-bound Hall boat was signalled brought us at last down again to Lisbon and on board the *Malaga*, a newer ship than the one we had come out in, and equally comfortable.

The Tagus is a weird river, for there are some spots in it, I am told, where the lead-line has never found a bottom. Many years ago the s.s. *Nubian* struck a rock, and though she foundered close to the spot where she had struck, she went down in such deep water that she lies there to this day, with all her treasures, far beyond the reach of divers. Looking back as we steamed off, the city presented a striking appearance; the houses turned to gold in the evening light, and every rock and peak of the Cintra mountains stood out in deep purple against a daffodil sky—a sky, by-the-bye, with too much green in it to promise us a calm homeward run. The glass, too, agreed in the prediction of more bad weather coming—and come it did in good earnest, before we had reached Finisterre. A tremendous south-westerly gale brought mountainous seas into

“Biscay’s sleepless Bay,” and the few passengers on board had a miserable time, and all kept their berths for four days, leaving the solitary survivor of the outward voyage again alone at the table with the captain and officers !

Though we managed to amuse each other fairly well, I did not have quite such a lively time as when on one of the *Messagerie* boats crossing from Lyons to Algiers. A narrow, light-built steamer and a most vicious sea combined to render the movement so violent that it was almost impossible to stand or get about at all, and the waves swept the deck from end to end, and caused a perfect stampede for berths amongst the passengers as soon as we got clear of Marseilles Harbour. Hardened by much knocking about in small yachts, though, I managed to turn up at the dinner-table (quite alone), and a very vivacious evening with the French officers ensued, our chattering and laughter quite cheering the poor sufferers in their berths, they told me afterwards !

The glorious majesty of the sea in its wrath out in the Bay of Biscay amongst the great, long, rolling waves that sweep in there with their 3000 miles of unbroken force goes far towards compensating a lover of the beauties

of ocean for the discomfort experienced by the violent motion. Standing or sitting on the deck was impossible owing to the drenching spray, and often solid sea-water, that broke over the vessel, so I accepted the kind invitation of the Captain to climb up on to the bridge, and there from behind the canvas screen watched the play of light and shade on the angry waters with a delight that never tired of the sight. One of the loveliest effects to watch for in rough weather is the quickly forming and vanishing rainbow, that spans for a brief second the clouds of spray thrown off from the ship's side, and another exquisite piece of colour is seen in the green top of a big indigo-blue wave as the light shines through it before it breaks. The jagged horizon line, too, in a gale constantly cheats one into thinking there is land to be seen. How grandly well one feels after days in that strong air! Perhaps the poor invalids, who have spent the time in stuffy cabins, will hardly agree with me, but I never wonder at the sound health enjoyed by most of the merchant service officers I have met. In advancing years even, they seem absolutely free from rheumatism, gout, neuralgia, and all the horrors that mark the decline of

life in a landsman. The breakfasts these strong men eat after a four hours' watch on the bridge is an amazing sight. A soup-plate of porridge, two mutton chops with fried potatoes, a large plate of curry and rice, many hot cakes with butter and jam, four apples, and three cups of tea was a specimen breakfast I noted on one occasion, the partaker being the Captain himself, who heartily jeered at the boiled egg and devilled bone that is the utmost we landlubbers can manage after a night under warm eider-downs in a quiet, peaceful bed.

The run up-Channel before the wind was steady after the smashing about in the Bay, so one by one pale-faced occupants reappeared in the deck-chairs and soon became convalescent, for it is strange to notice in how short a time the effects of sea-sickness pass off. We found old England in the grip of cold, fog, and general depression, and I would gladly have turned back again to the sunshine and warmth of the land we had left behind us on the other side of Finisterre.

CHAPTER V

ROUND ABOUT SICILY

SUNRISE on a lovely spring morning and the fist of the watchman banging on my door. "Entering the Straits, Mum," he said, according to a promise extracted from him on the previous evening, and in less than ten minutes I was on the upper deck of the P. & O. *Coromandel*, taking my first look at that land of fable, romance, and beauty—the ball flying from the toe of Italy's boot. Golden beams from the newly-risen sun fell full on the white city backed with rugged purple hills; and beyond them, whiter than the city, rose into the blue ether that majestic pyramid, regal Etna, looking on that fair, still, early morning so pure, and solemn, and unearthly that she might have been the very throne of the Most High! No wonder that the Ancients, "groping blindly in the darkness" before the dawn broke over the manger at Bethlehem, but feeling something of this awesome idea, made Sicily one



Monastery of St. Peter
+ Paul

of the chief homes of their gods, fixed Etna as the great forge in the mighty furnaces of which Vulcan's thunderbolts were made, turned the Cyclops rocks on the southern coast into the missiles which blind Polyphemus hurled after Ulysses, the rock of Scylla into the seat of a frightful monster which devoured sailors (taking six off the *Argos* at one snap), and gave the whirlpool Charybdis the power of dragging victims down to terrible caverns inhabited by demons !

That passage through the Straits was my first transitory glimpse of Dante's "lovely Trinacria," and she laid her spell upon me as I passed and called me back to know her better. Was any bad dream, I wonder, on that sweet April morn fluttering through the brain of any one of the vast number of peaceful sleepers in the tranquil white city?—an awful nightmare of another dawn to come on a winter's morning, at 5.30, on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, 1908, when the prosperous cities on both sides of the Straits were to crumble into heaps of ghastly ruins with 200,000 souls buried beneath their débris? Probably *no* thought of peril entered ever into the heads of the inhabitants,

any more than it did into mine when I stayed in one of the since vanished hotels of Messina, and that in spite of the known fact that the land has been torn and rent repeatedly by throes of earthquake and eruption since the first recorded one in 475 B.C.

However awful the lesson, it is, providentially, perhaps, soon forgotten. As Lisbon and San Francisco rose again, so will Messina arise from her tomb and regain prosperity; on the very same place, and (that is where folly comes in) built in the very same way. Her position makes her existence a necessity; she is the doorway into Sicily from the Continent. Earthquakes have been in Sicily far back beyond the reach of history, for the trace of them is shown in the Ancients' idea of the Giant Typhœus lying under the whole land, his right arm reaching to the Faro of Messina, his left leg to Cape Marsala, while from the crater comes his flaming breath. No wonder that, when he writhes and turns, towns fall and mountains quake!

For general interest of all kinds—classic, artistic, and amusing—there is no more fascinating country in the world as a goal for a voyage, and as I have paid it three short

visits, both overland and by sea, I will devote this chapter to its charms, not dwelling on the voyage out to it, which can be taken in many different ways—by North German Lloyds from Southampton to Naples, for instance, and thence by a line of most comfortable steamers direct to Palermo, or passengers on the Cruising Co.'s tours can arrange to have a week in the island before being picked up for a cruise to the Levant, and I am sure those who decided to spend several weeks there would never have a tedious hour in its glorious balmy climate and amidst its surpassing beauty of prospect. Of course, only those who are interested in history, architecture, botany, and all that Nature offers at her best should go there. Visitors who want golf-links, bridge in the evenings at hotels, good croquet lawns, and fashionable promenades, would be better at Biarritz or Nice.

Not all the country is yet available for travel. Strange though it seems in our prosaic days of the twentieth century, there are wild parts where very real dangers can be met with; in fact, wherever the railways are not, brigands still are, and carriages and mail-coaches have

actually to be protected by an armed escort! All along the south coast from Messina to Syracuse, though, there is safety, and the "Forestieri" (outsiders) are welcomed, for the iron road has scared off the marauders even as on the Nile the steamers have scared off the crocodiles to higher and wilder waters. Slowly the lines will be extended, and fresh beauty-spots will be given to the world. Now the great tract between Girgenti and Sciacca is almost unknown, and so is the still more fertile country between Sciacca and Palermo, yet it is all lovely and brimming over with wild flowers, ruins, and unpainted pictures. Motors will no doubt before long abound in these parts, and I do not think an instance has yet been recorded of one being "held up," though after the motor races they must have been running all over the land—for motorists are not given to nerves! I am sorry for the pedestrians, though, left behind a heavy high-power car, for I never saw such thick, light dust anywhere as on the roads near Catania, but I believe further south the metaling is harder, and as the asphalt which paves the streets of Europe comes from Ragusa a very little outlay and enterprise would make

Sicily one of the finest motor-touring countries in the world.

Since the line arrived at Girgenti it is already pulling itself together and beginning to cater properly for travellers. Two fairly good hotels are now to be found in that most interesting place with its glorious Greek temples, and the green slopes whereon olives grow and sheep browse, over the stones of that great city which was conquered by the Carthaginians 406 B.C. Modern Girgenti lies to the west of the old site, perched high on a hill. The youngster, by-the-bye, was already venerable in our Middle Ages, but in a land where the temple of Zeus is still standing—

“A noble wreck in ruinous perfection,”

nothing A.D. counts for age. Down below the town lies the harbour where our steamer's launch landed us, Porto Empedocle, the mole of which is, alas, composed of the stones and columns from the temple which stood nearest! It was despoiled for the purpose, and the stones rolled down the hill! The finest Doric architecture that has ever been given to art pulled to pieces to build a mole!

The Sicilians are a light-hearted race, much

given to loquacity. When you meet them *en masse* it reminds you of the monkey-house at the Zoo—all talking at once and with extravagant and most expressive gestures. Their tempers are of effervescent quality; heated arguments soon turn to quarrels, and frequently heavy blows are falling, and sometimes knives even flashing, between two men who five minutes before had been laughing and chaffing each other. The peasant boys are picturesque and active and some of the young girls pretty, otherwise I consider them a plain race, though the manners of all have a natural courtliness that is pleasing. The mendacity of the women and children and the squalor and dirt of the poorer classes is beyond words.

High up in the mountain villages and in the more unfrequented towns the women still wear not only the national working dress but on Sundays and festas the gala-dress which has adorned their ancestors since mediæval times—brocaded silk skirts, solid silver waistbelts and earrings, and a blue hooded cloak for mass. These unfortunately are getting less and less seen, and Anunciata likes to array herself in cheap and nasty clothes “made in Germany,” while Beppo fancies himself



greatly in loud checks and suits of astounding cut, in which, truth to tell, he looks horribly commonplace and unwashed. If he only knew how much more dignified his father appears, unshaven though he may be, in his worsted cap and stockings and his Sunday suit of velvet !

Altogether the Sicilian peasant with his many moods is an interesting person to watch and study. We may all see him occasionally, even in the heart of London, when the marvellous genius of Grasso and his fellow-actors brings the real living beings actually before one with every emotion that the Sicilian's or any other human nature is capable of. Again Sicily and its people come to us even by our own fireside, portrayed in that masterpiece of fiction, *The Call of the Blood*. There is the thing itself, living and palpitating—albeit drawn with a lover's pen, tenderly, with the faults eliminated, for there is hint of neither the dirty streets and houses in the towns, nor of that other and still worse blot on the land—the appalling cruelty to animals ! *This* is the great drawback to one's enjoyment of the country, constantly bringing a saddening and haunting note into the pleasures of a day. In Palermo the S.P.C.A. is

doing good work, and as it is backed up by the leading residents you rarely have your feelings shocked there, nor at Taormina, where the foreign element is too strong and too highly valued for it to be allowed, but directly you get off the beaten track you find it reigning supreme.

Leaving my steamer early one morning I spent a whole day sketching at the beautiful town of Aci Reale. Here the traveller does not often come, though the air is famous and the views of Etna are superb, but the fearful sufferings of the animals—mules especially—with harness galling open sores, being thrashed under burdens from a stone quarry that would be a load for two strong horses, made me so sick with disgust, that I fled from the town, lest I should attack one of the brutal drivers with my parasol, and thereby get myself into trouble, for I speak no Sicilian, and no one there speaks anything else. But what can you expect of the men when they are brought up to callous cruelty? I am credibly informed, that to catch a rat, soak the poor thing in paraffin, and set it on fire is a favourite form of a cheap and amusing treat for the children ! The unfortunate mules and horses are all gaily

bedizened ; the horses wear long pheasant's-tail feathers standing erect between their ears, and the mules have a high arrangement of feathers, ribbons, bells, and tassels on their harness, and another topknot on their heads. The country carts, on very high wheels, are painted in bright colours all over, amazing pictures of battle, murder, and shipwreck being depicted on the panels, and one often sees red harness—reins, traces, and all complete—in the equipages of the élite.

Aci Reale's public gardens are exquisite. Innumerable butterflies, even in March, flit about under the palm-trees and aromatic shrubs, masses of brilliant coloured cinerarias scent the air, while the turquoise sea far below, dashing over the lava rocks, sends the cadence of its music up to mingle with the songs of birds. This town was completely destroyed by the terrible earthquake of 1693, when most of Catania was overthrown and 30,000 perished. Sitting on the steamer's deck in Catania Harbour, I tried in vain to picture the scene of that overthrow, but it seemed to me like an old wife's fable, a legend of prehistoric times that has no terrors for the present day. That is, I think, what every one feels. It cannot be

realised, the nature of the catastrophe being abnormal, and therefore people go to these places fearlessly.

Taormina alone of all Sicilian towns boasts an absolute immunity from earthquakes, though they never could have been severe at Girgenti, or the Greek temples would not be still standing. Etna (10,870 ft. high) is best ascended from Catania, where there is a bureau of the Italian Alpine Club to give information as to guides and route. The usual one adopted is to take train or carriage to Nicolosi; there mules and guides are engaged and the ascent begins. In the forests that clothe the slopes up to an altitude of 6000 ft. the sportsman will find hares, rabbits, and even a few boars and wolves, but when the higher regions are attained all vegetation and animal life vanishes, and nothing reigns there but desolation, ice, snow, and sulphurous smoke from the fiery heart within.

The coast line everywhere is beautiful, but that between Messina and Palermo is more fertile than on the south side: oranges, and lemons, and almonds grow in orchards all the way along the stretch of level country between the mountains and the sea, which is dotted on

the horizon with the Lipari Isles—like little grey cones and mounds. A sail in one of the fishing-boats, or a run in the little trading steamer, over to the largest of these islets makes a charming day's excursion. They all do a brisk trade in wine, that made in Stromboli being famous—as good, I believe, as the Capri wine, though of course, from the small size of the isle, the quantity is limited. Its wonderful volcanic peak, “the lighthouse of the Mediterranean” as it is called, is not, I think, ever visible from Sicily (at any rate *I* have never been able to make it out), the isle being the furthest off of the group. My sketch from Messina shows Reggio and the Straits before the earthquake. This wonderful narrow neck of water was supposed to have been brought into existence by an earthquake in pre-historic times. Virgil in the *Æneid* says—

“Th’ Italian shore

And fair Sicilia’s coast were one before

An earthquake caused the flow ; the roaring tides

The passage broke, that land from land divides,”

and modern science agrees with this view of the matter.

After leaving our steamer and finishing our tour in Sicily we crossed the Straits and took

the train along the Calabrian coast to Brindisi, where we joined an Italian mail steamer and went up the Adriatic to Venice; but it would not do for an artist writing on a subject not directly connected with art to let her pen break loose on the glories of that enchanting city, so we will respectfully turn our back on her sweet face and return to the Calabrian coast, which really is worth something more than the distant view voyagers get of it from a steamer's deck. It is indeed an almost unexplored land for tourists, which is an attraction in itself, if the traveller does not mind roughing it in primitive hotels. The chief industry is that of growing oranges and lemons, especially the latter. They go off in whole train-loads and are sold at 7s. per 1000. The coast was dotted with little fishing-hamlets with picturesque boats lying in small harbours, but how many survived the awful earthquake and tidal wave that followed it, sweeping far inland over the railway line and the fields and orchards, I am unable to say. Cotrone was when I passed along there a busy little seaport, though very different from the great city it was in 510 B.C., when it sent 100,000 men into the field against Sybaris.

I liked the sole of Italy's boot better than the famous Gulf of Taranto which forms its instep. During the seven centuries B.C. it was in the zenith of its power, and here the all-conquering Romans for once turned tail, being panic-stricken by the fighting elephants of Pyrrhus, 280 B.C. Taranto was the chief seat of learning and luxury in the south of Italy, and there is much to interest the antiquarian and artist in the place now, though its glory has departed. At the back of the town is a curious lake connected with the sea by a short canal—a splendid place for rowing and small boat sailing, and the epicure can feast on the finest oysters in the world at 5d. per dozen.

There is only one passenger train in the twenty-four hours along this coast, and that takes twenty-two hours to get from Reggio to Brindisi, stopping five hours at Catanza and three at Metaponto. A nice "rapide"! When we (husband and self) embarked at Brindisi we were fairly done for with knocking about for days with two broken nights running, and were pleased to find a most comfortable new ship on her second voyage only, and no other first-class passengers on board. We felt too tired to stay up and see the departure from

Brindisi Harbour, but the next morning congratulated ourselves on still having the opportunity of doing so as we were still alongside the quay, apparently not having moved. However, when we got on deck it occurred to us that the lighthouse the night before had surely been on the other side of the entrance, and it gradually dawned upon us that we were not in Brindisi Harbour at all, but in Bari, 60 miles away! So completely had we slept the sleep of exhaustion that the departure and voyage had never disturbed us for a second! At 8.30 we partook of a good plain breakfast, and had hardly finished it when at 9.30 preparations heralded the advent of a large and substantial meal, the *ménu* promising us several courses with "vin compris," and altogether a heavy feed. On inquiry the broken French of the steward gave us to understand that we were expected to sit down to it then and there, for after this was over a whole day's fast till 6 P.M. was before us. Feeding then was an impossibility, but the steward spoke to the Captain, who kindly gave orders for us to be served whenever we chose, so we asked for anything they liked to give us at 1.0 instead of 9.30, and did ample justice

to it then. Passengers on Italian steamers must beware of these funny hours for meals—unless they are combining a holiday with a Banting cure !¹

I am afraid this chapter has been mostly a “high and dry” account, but voyages in big ships are largely dependent for their success and enjoyment on the lands visited, and one undertakes them in a very different spirit from that which accompanies us on a cruise in our own small yacht. There one forgets the world and its conventions, and gives oneself over to a jolly fresh-air life which is almost that of a water-gypsy. The interest of navigating the boat is ours also, to atone for the loss of sights and historical scenes that occupy the mind so when the big ship brings us to those far-off shores beyond the reach of all small yachts—shores which none with a scrap of intelligence and imagination could visit without having the mind stimulated and refreshed.

¹ The tragic end of this fine steamer has just come. On the 26th of November (1911) I read this in the *Daily Mail*: “The Italian steamer *Romagna* overturned in a heavy sea in the Adriatic on Thursday night, sixty persons being drowned. Ten persons were rescued by the crew of the steamship *Tyrol*, which at great risk stood by for some time.”

CHAPTER VI

THROUGH THE ARCHIPELAGO AND DARDANELLES IN A TRADING STEAMER

A GREAT piece of luck for two such sea-lovers as my husband and self came to us in a three months' cruise and tour through the Levant, Palestine, and Near East in general, a portion of which only comes into this chapter, for the whole of our travels on that occasion would fill a book in itself, and would lead us off the coasts visited on voyages completely. The vessel on which we sailed from Liverpool was one of a famous line of trading steamers, and we had the good fortune to be the guests on board for the whole voyage, owing to our near relationship to one of the owners. We were therefore the sole passengers on a ship of 3560 tons and 330 ft. long, and had for shipmates besides the Captain, three officers, two engineers, and twenty-five men, including our steward. Two very fine state-rooms (kept solely for the directors) were ours, and except



A ROCK VILLAGE, SICILY

for meals, when the Captain and officers joined us, we had the saloon entirely to ourselves.

The country as we travelled down to Liverpool was hard-bound in ice and snow at the end of one of the coldest Januaries I ever remember, and there was a good deal of floating ice in the Mersey as we slowly made our way down it. All the more delightful, therefore, was the gradual change to warmer conditions, for, when Finisterre and the Burlings were left behind, the heat of the sun and the balmy breezes off the Spanish coast permitted an open-air life on deck all day long. We passed near Cape St. Vincent, and had a good view of it and the isolated rock off it. So deep is the water between these two that a ship's Captain once took his steamer through the narrow passage in safety—with more daring than wisdom, I should say, and if the managing director of his Company ever heard of it I expect he had some comments to make to him on the subject! From there we ran in seventeen hours to Gibraltar, signalling from Cape Sagras as we passed. Sighted the lights on both Trafalgar and Spartel, on the Moorish coast, and passed the great Rock in the dark at 2.45 A.M. Then the Algerian coast was visible, as we steamed

along it about five miles off, and the island of Pantalaria, 46 miles from Cape Bon in Algeria, interested me much, for we passed along so close to it that we could make out the site of the ancient Cossyre, which played its part in the battles of Carthage and Rome, on the slope above the present town. This fertile and mountainous little isle offers a perfectly untrodden field of exploration for the tourist or yachting party, and I wonder it has not yet been discovered, as boats call there from Genoa and Naples twice weekly.

After ten days at sea we entered Valetta Harbour at 3 A.M., spent a whole day pleasantly in Malta, and then headed for Cape Matapan, 385 miles off, without an island or a shoal between; but after Cape Malea, also on the Grecian mainland, was passed we entered the Archipelago, and soon sighted numbers of the barren rocky islets, the smaller members of the classic group. These, lacking water, are mostly useless, but on some wild goats and rabbits manage to exist. It was for the beautiful island of Syra that we were making, the largest of the Cyclades, and with by far the finest harbour, and as there was a good deal of cargo to be delivered and shipped there

we had a two days' stay, and were received with the greatest kindness and hospitality by the leading residents, who had been apprised of our advent, and who drove us about all over the place. The town is in two divisions, the modern part, called Hermopolis, lying by the water's edge, and the old Syra (pronounced *Seera*) perched above it on the top of a conical hill, where it had been built to be out of the way of the pirates who once infested these waters. As old and new both are of glistening white marble, the place looked like a great wedding-cake from the water, with one building crowning its top like a sugar ornament! The dark tree-clad hills behind the town are a fitting background to its whiteness. The streets are so steep that carriages have to drive up by zigzag rounds, but pedestrians ascend by flights of wide steps that would put to blush the vaunted streets of stairs in Malta, for they are all of the purest Parian marble brought from the neighbouring isle of Tinos, and therefore used as the cheapest and commonest building material here. The quays are composed of it, and the aged poor are pensioned off in a marble palace that might have been built for an Eastern monarch, so

splendid is it. Here the happy paupers end their remaining days in clover, reading and chatting in a covered piazza that forms a quadrangle enclosing a charming garden.

We were immensely surprised at this delightful almshouse, to which we were taken by one of the chief merchants of the town with justifiable pride, presenting such a contrast as it does to the miserable state of the old and disabled poor in Southern Europe and the East, who are left to keep body and soul together by begging alone—becoming, thereby, an insufferable pest to visitors—or to die of neglect and want. Information was rather difficult to gather from our friend, who drove us about in his comfortable carriage, as he spoke nothing but Greek, and his clerk who accompanied him only a very little English. My husband could make out most of what he wrote down, as modern Greek has changed very little in its characters, though the pronunciation is so different from that taught in schools that it is unintelligible to a classical scholar.

The interior of Syra is composed of a delightful well-wooded valley. Much honey is found there, made by the wild bees, and this forms the chief ingredient of the delicious

“Turkish Delight,” which is a specialty of these islands, and far more delicate in flavour than that made at Constantinople. On the second night of our stay a grand ball was given at the Club, and the invitation to it was too cordial and pressing to be refused, though it was the last thing we had anticipated in the Cyclades! Few people in the room spoke anything but Greek, the Babel of chatter in this language having a curious effect in a ball-room. The fashionable costume of the ladies was a great surprise to us, and the splendid diamonds they wore also, but I am told there is great wealth amongst the inhabitants of Hermopolis. When we left at midnight a change had come in the weather, rain was falling in torrents, and water rushing in rivers down the steep marble streets. A boat was in waiting for us that had been engaged by our friend, rowed by men he knew, as we were warned that it was not safe to trust to any that might be on the look-out for a job, for in all these Greek ports there are numerous desperate characters amongst the boatmen. Terrible tales are told of the way in which passengers, when being rowed out at night to some ship, have been robbed and knifed and

their bodies sunk by the fishermen, who have then capsized their boat and swum to shore with tales of an accident. The hue and cry has been raised and the overturned boat recovered, but not the body of the passenger, who has gone to the bottom with a piece of iron ballast attached to him. We were assured that this has been done often.

The anchor was coming up when we embarked, and we put out in the teeth of a gale which knocked up such a sea that sleep was impossible, the boat rolling fearfully all night, and the weather was altogether most unpleasant, being colder than we had felt it since leaving the Bay of Biscay. It seemed dangerous on a dark, stormy night to be charging through a sea literally peppered with rocky islands mostly unlighted: half a point's deviation from the exact compass course would spell disaster—but then that deviation is of course never made! How ships in the olden days could navigate these waters in safety with no lights, no charts, and no compass is a mystery. The voyage described in the Acts by St. Luke must have been a typical one with all its difficulties. I can only imagine vessels must usually have brought up for the

dark hours of night in these waters. There are numerous beautiful natural harbours in the islands, and few outlying perils—deep water right up to them, often 12 or 15 fathoms, and no submerged rocks.

“Eternal sunshine gilds them yet,”

though, is a rule occasionally broken. We could see little of those homes of the old gods, Delos and Mimas, in the morning; and the lovely island of Khios, where the roses grow from which the Turkish Attar is distilled, looked grey through a mist of rain; but the weather soon gets over its fit of ill-temper in these favoured parts, and when towards evening we entered the Bay of Smyrna and brought up in the harbour the sun was again shining.

A leading Greek merchant of the old city came at once to call on us, and kindly offered to show us the sights of the town, which he did till darkness came on, and then insisted on our returning to dine with him and his English wife, of whom he seemed immensely proud. She was a nice girl, who had come out to Smyrna as a governess. She eagerly talked of England, and I thought seemed bored and home-sick among her strange foreign sur-

roundings, as most of our nation do who marry aliens and settle far from their native land. As dinner progressed I was conscious of a growing warmth around the legs, which presently increased to almost unpleasant heat! On asking the reason of this I was shown a heating arrangement of charcoal called a *scaldino* placed, where you certainly would not look for it—under the table! Not a bad dodge on a chilly evening, but hardly a safe one, I thought.

We took a drive the next day, which was the most extraordinary experience of the kind I have ever had, for directly you leave this large and important town the roads are so indescribable that progress on them is impossible for any distance. We got finally stuck in such a quagmire that the carriage nearly upset, and we all had to get out in the mud while the floundering horses dragged it with difficulty from the deep hole in which it was embedded. This is the rule everywhere in Asiatic Turkey—the Government will do nothing towards making or keeping up roads, and, in a joking spirit of irony, I should think, makes an individual or a town that repairs them pay a heavy tax for the privilege of

being allowed to do so. Naturally, trade with the interior is paralysed, and the population of the country is sparse, cut off as it is from the means of bringing produce into the big towns. As wheeled vehicles are out of the question, long strings of camels take their place, the head of each made fast to the preceding one's crupper, and the procession led by a man seated on a donkey. They are called "winter camels," and are clothed with long wool coats which fit them for more severe weather than their lighter clad brethren of Egypt have to endure. We paid a visit to the emporium for the best Turkey carpets and purchased one. Here those for the Sultan of Turkey and all the great Pashas are received from the local places where they are made, and altogether £100,000 worth are sent out annually.

One night intervened between our leaving the Gulf of Smyrna and entering the Dardanelles at a town called Chanák, where we stopped to get *pratique* and a ship's passport called a Firman, without which no vessel may go through the Dardanelles. The orders stand that any one attempting to do so shall be fired on from the curious forts that guard the passage.

Think they guard it, rather—poor, quaint little buildings! The guns from any modern battleship would blow them to pieces in a few minutes. The centre fort is heart-shaped and of great antiquity. A Firman is indeed an extraordinary looking document to Western eyes, the Turkish characters being more like music than letters. One of the officers showed it to the ship's carpenter once, and asked if he could read it. "No," he replied, "but my brother could play it on his flute." It was at Chanák that the armies of Xerxes, Alexander, and Darius crossed from Asia to Europe on bridges of boats. This wonderful neck of water is 40 miles long and half a mile wide at its narrowest—a good swim for Leander and Lord Byron, but not one-fourth of the passage across the Solent, which was swum a few years ago by a girl.

People have often asked me if I did not find the long runs on this voyage tedious with no fellow-passengers to talk to. Tedious? With the ever-changing sea all around, and the heaving deck "like a thing of life" beneath the feet! Never did I find one day too long. Books, needle-work, and painting filled up the hours, necessary exercise was taken for a



IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

certain amount of time each day, and we were given the complete run of the steamer in a manner that can never be accorded on an ordinary passenger boat. The Captain encouraged us to come into his chart-room and follow our course on the chart, we sat behind the canvas dodgers on the bridge, and my husband spent much time in the engine-room, which I also visited. Even on a large P. & O. boat, by-the-bye, I once got round the chief engineer, and through his courtesy inspected the great engine-room, and penetrated to that awful region where half-naked men, looking demon-like and fantastic in the red glare, keep the life-blood beating in the heart of the monster by ceaseless feeding of the glowing furnaces. It seems astounding that so many men can be found ready to take upon themselves this hard way of earning a living—down in those terrible infernos of heat, and glare, and coal-dust, and noise. What a contrast their lives present to those of their fellow-creatures lolling in deck-chairs high up over their heads!

At Panderma, on the Sea of Marmora, we “worked cargo” for two days. It is one of those unhappy places where the mixed popula-

tion of Armenians and Moslems are constantly coming to blows. They live in a state of terror, and you see hardly any women in the streets at all, and those slip nervously along closely veiled. Our Armenian agent took us to his house, and introduced us to his children, wife, mother, father, and grandmother, all living together. The old lady made a deep reverence and salaamed, but the younger members shook hands. Their version of afternoon tea was brought in—cigarettes and Turkish coffee, glasses of jam to be eaten breadless with tea-spoons, and one large glass of water in the centre of the tray, the purpose of which remained a mystery, but we suppose it was for the public use, like a loving cup, to wash down the sweets. This family between them spoke Armenian, Turkish, Greek, French, and English. The host took us afterwards to see their fine church, and explained some tenets that we did not understand in connection with their worship, which differs chiefly from the Roman branch of the Catholic Faith in that the Pope is not their head. We bought a lot of ducks and fowls there at 6d. each ; it seems a very cheap place to live in, but we thanked Providence that our lot was not that of an Armenian in such a

volcanic air of party spirit and fear of conflict and massacre !

After this we spent several days full of interest and charm at Constantinople, lying in the Golden Horn and hospitably entertained by residents each day. As we were not to proceed up the Bosphorus in our own steamer, we took the run in one of the small daily boats that call at each little town on this enchanting piece of water—half the length of the Dardanelles. The shocking method the Turks have used lately to abolish the scavenger dogs of the city did not surprise me, as I knew it was an old trick of theirs, for a credible witness told me of it then, and that he had seen three lighters loaded with the poor creatures being towed out to die of starvation and thirst on one of the barren islands in the Sea of Marmora. Their numbers were constantly thinned down in this barbarous manner. One would think it would have been so much less trouble to have adopted the more humane plan of collecting and drowning litters of young puppies, yet I saw numbers of the tiny things being reared in all directions unmolested, and the vast numbers of the dogs amazed me. I counted eleven on one rubbish heap alone.

We stayed for a day and night in the charming house of an English merchant near the famous graveyard where so many Crimean heroes lie, at Scutari. The excellent servants in the house were imported from the island of Khios, where most of the maids come from. They arrive in large batches for the European houses in the capital—and I only wish there was a big Khios near England!

We were honoured with a bow from the late Sultan himself when we were, with the members of the foreign legations, the guests of the Sovereign's Chamberlain, Emin Pasha, at the Selamlik. I have never seen a more depressed, sad-looking man than his Autocratic Majesty, and I expect the foreboding of the sad events to come upon him was even then hovering before his mental vision. That crown must always rest on a troubled brow.

The cold was severe. Though so far south, Constantinople is away from the Gulf Stream's saving influence on our northern shores, and bitter winds sweep down from the snow-clad Caucasian Mountains till May, when I believe intense heat sets in. Our deck was covered with snow one morning, and we had to purchase goloshes, not only to keep the three

inches of slush and mud out of our boots, but also because you are not supposed to go into houses without them, and people long used to residence there are shocked at the idea of any one walking over beautiful carpets and entering reception rooms with boots just out of the mud ! Visitors leave goloshes at the hall-door, members of the household change into slippers there ; an excellent clean custom !

As the agents of our line kindly placed a carriage and pair of horses at our disposal, as well as an English-speaking Arab clerk for guide, we saw all the buildings and objects of interest in great comfort, and were very sorry when the time came to leave the city of minarets and domes behind us on its glittering waters, and steam back through the Sea of Marmora and Dardanelles, past the ruins of Troy, far behind which Mount Ida sat in a mantle of snow, and out again into the Archipelago. The ship wound her way through innumerable rocky islands of the Sporades group, by Cnidus (which St. Paul passed on his voyage), with its beetling cliffs and precipices, close to fertile, lovely Samos, kept some miles from Patmos, on which we could see the white house covering the site where the

holy prisoner in his cell had his unearthly visions, and between Rhodes and Scarpanto into the Levant. Then followed 300 miles of open sea, calm and unruffled, till at sunset one evening we sighted the Alexandria Light and soon afterwards were taken charge of by the pilot. A queer thing in pilots he was, too!—clad in white, flowing robes, with bare legs, feet in red slippers, and a turban on his head. Five other men, similarly attired, were in the boat with him—a partly-decked schooner of eight tons.

In this fine harbour we left our ship, after some days' stay alongside the quay for seeing the city and neighbourhood, and embarked on the Khedivial mail boat for Jaffa, joining another steamer of the line again, after many weeks of travel, at Alexandria for the homeward run, which was broken only at Lisbon.

A few of the things our cargo consisted of on the voyage to Liverpool may be added as conclusion to this chapter, to show what the steamers go out to fetch: 3000 bales of cotton (worth £20 each); 7000 boxes of Jaffa oranges; 185 tons of maize; 100 tons of oilcake; 5 tons of horns; 100 tons of cotton seed; 19,000 sacks of onions; and other things, besides 50,000 live

quails in cages (the mortality amongst them was considerable, and their presence was not an additional pleasure to the voyage in consequence), and £50,000 worth of bar gold in boxes, brought on board under escort and placed under *our* berths for safety!

CHAPTER VII

A GLANCE AT CYPRUS

CYPRUS is a little possession of ours far away in the Eastern Mediterranean which is so well worth visiting that I marvel it is not made more of by the travelling public, that it is not more appreciated and assisted by our Government, and colonised by hundreds who like a warmer and more equable climate than England offers. It had always interested me much, and therefore I hailed with joy the opportunity of a flying visit to two of its chief ports afforded on our voyage in the Asia Minor S.S. Co.'s steamer from Beyrout to Port Said. Though we had only two days' stay at each we made the utmost of every minute of the short time, and as we had a good introduction to residents at each port, we managed to glean a good deal of information about the country and people in general. I really wonder why people with large steam yachts do not spend a winter round its shores instead of following the same



Famagusta
The "Sea-port in Cyprus" of Othello



Larnaca

M.S.

TWO PORTS IN CYPRUS

old beaten track year by year to the ports of the Riviera!

The finest of its harbours is the first one we arrived at—Famagusta, the “Seaport in Cyprus” of “Othello” and the scene of the great tragedy. And in all the world, could imagination fix on a more suitable setting for it than the massive fortifications and towers in this dead city—never, we presume, seen by the great dramatist himself, yet selected for it with the unerring instinct of supreme genius? Except for the trade on the quay, where merchandise and produce were being landed and shipped, the place is one vast scene of wreckage. The magnificent battlements, three feet thick, built, regardless of trouble and expense so long as perfection was obtained, by the Venetians, seem left almost as if their fall into the hands of the Turk, after a siege which is one of the most terrible in the annals of history, was a matter of twenty years ago, instead of the time when Elizabeth sat on the English throne and Catherine de Medici was plotting the massacre of the Huguenots! I can hardly believe that when England takes more pride in this bright jewel now set in her crown, the great gaunt arms of those empty walls will not yet hold a

thriving, prosperous multitude, and I can see the stretches of desolate country all around covered in that future day with growing and ripening crops and orchards. From what I gathered, all that is needed to bring about this result is a proper system of irrigation and drainage for the land, which would be well worth the trouble. The ruined Cathedral is on the same scale of splendid building as the battlements, and a very little expenditure would make it fit again for the worship of the God for whom it was built—the Triune God of the Christian, not the Mahometan's Allah, who is worshipped in a portion of it, over which the minaret is erected (shown in my sketch).

As I sat about sketching on these lonely deserted walls and the shades of twilight deepened, my fancy ran riot over the scenes of long ago of which the wreckage is eloquent, and the place felt so deserted and uncanny that I was glad to leave it and return to the life of the little harbour, before, in the gathering darkness the ghost of the evil Mustafa, the merciless Turkish conqueror, should spring upon me from one of the embrasures and flay me alive as he did the noble Venetian general ! We took in here 310 mules for Jaffa and a

large number of sheep. The latter unfortunate animals were hoisted up by the crane seven together in a bunch, each held by one leg, yet though so roughly treated none seemed the worse for it afterwards! Our captain told me of an amusing incident that happened on his last voyage. They had been carrying a lot of sheep from Cyprus to Jaffa, and having landed them, proceeded on their way and forgot all about them. Many days afterwards one of the stokers came tearing aft with a white, scared face saying that the devil was in one of the bunkers, and had made a rush at him when he went to get coal. He knew it was the devil, for he had seen his horns. Not one of the men would go near the place, for they are all firm believers in his Satanic Majesty, and have a more wholesome dread of him than their actions would sometimes lead one to suppose. But at last the mate, being made of tougher stuff (or having a more assured conscience!) boldly opened the bunker door—when out rushed a miserable sheep, black with coal-dust and frantic with hunger, which must have been accidentally imprisoned there for days on a *coal diet*! Truly the Oriental animals are a long-suffering race.

Back in Roman times fleets of high-prowed galliotes sailed in here from Italy, Greece, and Phœnicia with vast numbers on board bound for neither pleasure nor trade, but to offer white doves at the shrine of Venus, for this isle was her home, and I believe some relics of her great temple still exist. Roman princes, nobles, and all who wanted her special aid, came here in person to propitiate the goddess with sacrifices and offerings. Famagusta is now the best natural harbour on the coast, and it probably was used in those B.C. days also, though the vast city and port of Salamis, about three miles off on the coast, was where most of the pilgrims landed, being near the temple, which fell with the city in a fearful earthquake in the reign of Constantine—as though typical of the downfall of heathendom in that reign of the first Christian Emperor. Salamis may be called the mother of Famagusta, as the stones of her ruins were used by the Venetians for the building of it.

On the evening of our second day we left for Larnaca and anchored off (for there is no harbour) at daybreak. This poor little town, which stands on the site of an ancient important city, has a curiously mixed popu-

lation of Moslems and Christians, about equally divided, I should suppose, and now, under British rule, all compelled to dwell together in more or less of unity. It is backed by mountains. I understand the scenery up in the hills of the interior is lovely, and the climate of Nicosia the capital, 25 miles from the sea, is perfect. Well-to-do residents go up there to escape the intense heat of the coast in the hot months; the wife of an officer who had been quartered there for two years told me the life there was delightful, like that of an Indian hill station at its best. Wonderful relics of the Egyptian occupation of the island nearly 3000 years ago are dug up around Larnaca. I saw a lovely collection at the Postmaster-General's house of beautiful glass vases and bowls that had been found in Egyptian tombs, the colours being far more beautiful than in our modern Venetian glass—iridescent with blue and opal. Did the Egyptians hand on this art of glass-making to their successors in the island, and from thence was the art transported to Venice? The inference seems to be suggested. The hunt for these buried treasures by private individuals is now prohibited, but they are collected for the British Museum.

We drove out into the country for a short distance, just to get an idea of it. Fancy can clothe it with its ancient dense forests with as great difficulty as it can rebuild all the magnificent vanished temples once to be found all over the 125 miles length of the land. In a fine church we saw the second tomb of Lazarus, but that is as empty as his first grave, which we had seen at Bethany, for 1000 years ago the Venetians removed what there was left of his body, built a monastery over it in their own land, and founded the Order of St. Lazare in connection with it.

The capable little native boats interested my husband, I am afraid I must admit, more than the relics of antiquity! So we hired one for a short sail, to see how we got on with her. She was rigged with one large lateen sail, did not beat to windward well, but in running or reaching was the fastest thing we had ever been in. There is a good pier at Larnaca, and probably by now the railway which was then only talked of is connecting Famagusta and Larnaca with the capital, and with Limosol, the third large port. No words can describe the blue of the sea round Cyprus. It was amazing; even the broken water thrown off

the ship's side was the colour of an Alpine gentian (my companion, whose mind is prosaic, said "Reckitt's blue"), and the white sails looked their best on it.

From Larnaca we made for Jaffa, and were delayed for nearly two days off there landing the animals and shipping a lot of Moslem pilgrims for Mecca. Fortunately the sea was wonderfully calm, such as it is not wont to be off that port. On the occasion of our embarking there on a Russian steamer for Beyrout a month previously a gale was blowing, and it was only just possible to get out at all through the surf to the ship, which was plunging in the hollows of great rolling waves. We were the only people out of sixteen who (well used to boats) landed on the gangway on our feet, our fellow-passengers tumbling back into the boats or embarking on their chests, noses, or anything that got there first! The gruff old Russian captain said to me afterwards in broken English, "Very bad sea here. Every year I drown at least one passenger. This year I drown three"! At Port Said we got rid of our pilgrims, who re-shipped for Jeddah, the port for Mecca, and proceeded on to Alexandria.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE SHRINE OF THE SEA-GOD

It is fitting that a book dealing with some of the pleasures and interests of life at sea, and the beauties of the coasts visited, should conclude with a glance at those pages of my journal which record a visit to the temple of the great sea-god himself—glorious, all-powerful Neptune (or Poseidon). Of the many fanes reared to his honour the particular one at which I paid my homage was that at Pæstum—perhaps the most perfect relic of Doric art in the world, the finest of three splendid temples standing near together which have survived the hands which raised them, and the minds which designed their noble proportions, by at least 2500 years !

It was during a cruise in the Mediterranean on the well-known ship *Argonaut* that my visit to Pæstum came about—a fortnight's voyage that had more crammed into it than



I should have thought possible in the time, but then the directors of the Cruising Co.'s pleasure voyages are experts in the art of giving their passengers a good full measure for their money. The *Argonaut* found a grave a few months later at the bottom of the English Channel, sinking with all her fine fittings and splendid engines after collision in a fog, but fortunately without loss of life. On this occasion we had visited Tunis and spent a day of great interest and instruction in that old Oriental city of the pirates, then an Easter Sunday of brilliant warmth and sunshine in Malta was succeeded by a flying visit to some of the ports of Sicily, and in the middle of the cruise we entered the Salernian Bay, anchored off the coast, and landed in the launch at Agropoli for our visit to Pæstum, whither we proceeded by special train—twenty minutes' run. There were about 100 other pilgrims from our ship to the sea-god's shrine, but the majority were satisfied with a cursory glance at the stately fanes, and soon walked off to pick flowers or make an excursion to the hills, so that I found myself almost alone for the greater part of the four hours I spent there—a fact I by no means regretted, as quiet

and solitude are the proper settings for these grand wrecks of bygone ages.

In the cold, drear days of winter the memory of that scene comes back to me like a brilliant gleam of sunshine on a dark and cloud-wrapt mountain. There those temples stand, in deserted and forlorn majesty, amidst wild flowers and a tangle of grasses and dwarfed shrubs, with no sound but the murmur of the sea, or a shepherd boy's song as he tends his flocks, no tenants in their arcades but the wild birds which build their nests where once the smoke of sacrifices rose and a vast multitude knelt in the mystic rites of an extinct worship, while behind the fluted columns the sea shimmers in a golden haze away to the horizon where Capri sits like an island ghost robed in palest blue. Yet about these temples once surged and hummed the life of a great city. For three miles round fragments of its ruined walls can be traced, but every sign of human habitation has vanished, and the bits of Roman pavement the ploughshare often reveals, or the portions of Grecian pillars or broken cisterns that strew the fields, mean nothing to the simple peasants and labourers of to-day, for the tale that they tell of those two

great nations of the earth who successively ruled in this classic land has no interest for their dull intellects. The sea is as lonely as the shore; only an isolated fishing-boat or passing steamer floats where once the galleys of nations teemed, bringing pilgrims to the great temples, or armies of the invaders who have landed and conquered there.

The only sign of the civilisation of to-day is to be found in the railway line which runs between the ancient site and the mountains. It is a comparatively recent innovation, and as in Sicily, its advent is rendering the country far safer than it was before, having scared away the brigands who infested the mountains formerly. An old friend of mine, the late Mr. Moens, was taken prisoner near Pæstum I think about fifty years ago (or perhaps less), and kept in bondage till a heavy ransom was paid for him. No such awkward question had to be settled by the directors of our line, though, on this occasion; all my fellow-travellers turned up at the station unkidnapped. In fact *I* was the only one causing some anxiety to our conductor, when I rushed in breathlessly just before the train arrived, the charms of that most fascinating spot having detained me

and my paint-brush there till the last minute. It wouldn't do to get stranded, by-the-bye, as there are at present (thank goodness!) neither hotels, shops, or any trace of even a nascent town round the little rustic station, and only two or three trains a day, so that to my surprise our own party were the only visitors apparently on that afternoon. The red rays of a declining sun were tinging the glorious shrines, and painting them even a richer colour than before when I took my last look at them, Neptune's temple standing up the proudest and highest and most perfect of the three, like the mighty element which was worshipped there behind the imaginary god—the great power that man can play with and work with but cannot command, and that for all time will compel his homage, his love, and his fear.

My return to the launch which took us out to the steamer was a real-life processional scene from an old Greek pastoral play! Having some time to spare before re-embarking, I had remained behind alone near the station to take a hasty sketch, and soon had a crowd of laughing, dark-eyed, Italian peasant boys round me, who escorted me for the mile



THE MARCHAN GATE, TANGIER

which intervened between the line and the shore, with high, bell-like, tuneful songs and laughter. Some cut down large branches of orange-trees with their ripe fruit, and arched them over my head, dancing along by my side, while another boy captured a small white lamb and ran before me with it in his arms to amuse me. Unlike the rude Dutch boys, they all kept very polite and courteous in spite of their high spirits, and I was quite sorry to part with such a merry escort and embark again as the darkness fell. We were soon leaving the Salernian Bay behind us, as we steamed off that night for the Bay of Naples, then came the incomparable coast drive to Amalfi, a hasty glance at that most charming town, followed by a flying visit to the island of Capri with its wonderful blue grotto. Then came our passage back to Marseilles, threading the Straits of Bonafacio between Sardinia and Corsica on the way.

So this, my last voyage, became, like the others I have taken, a page turned, and a record the more in the cells of memory, for *that* is what we gain when the cruise is done, and the holiday is over. The scenes we have witnessed, the incidents that have occurred,

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are ours for evermore—harvested safely in the rich granary of the mind, the deep voice of the sea, whether in the ripple of its wave-laughter or in the roar of Neptune's wrath and power, mingling with it all and enhancing its charm.

THE END



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